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EDITORIAL

TAX-FREE SEGREGATION

AP 2 .N37

gan Administration's approval of a Department policy giving tax exemp- racially discriminatory private schools, followed a few days later by its announcement that it would seek legislation to undo the effects of that decision, is an example of hypocrisy mitigated only by ineptness and confusion.

A strong case can be made that any institution performing a public function should be barred by law from discriminating. This would apply especially to schools, since the education they provide is not only an end in itself but an essential condition for obtaining the jobs and licenses that largely determine an individual's place in society. The very existence of racially segregated private schools is thus suspect, and awarding such schools the benefits of tax exemption is appalling.

The political significance of tax exemptions is more complex than it sometimes appears, however. The government does not see itself as promoting religion by granting tax exemptions to churches, for example, nor do the exemptions granted to nonprofit groups imply that the government endorses their policies. But even those who do not regard exemptions as subsidies must be struck by the utter hypocrisy of the Administration's position.

President Reagan would have us believe that he regards decisions about taxes as an inappropriate way to implement public policy. Yet his Administration has made it clear that it views tax policy as crucial to its domestic agenda. Everywhere else, the President and his men (literally) insist, tax benefits will produce results they want. But here we are asked to believe that the results of giving tax breaks to racist schools, i.e., sanctioning and promoting racially discriminatory education, were wholly unintended. Who are they kidding?

YALTA MYTHS
Alger Hiss

REAGAN'S NUKE PLAN
John Tirman

LEAVING SCOTLAND
James Campbell

A CLASSIC CARTEL
Kurt Rudolf Mirow
Harry Maurer

'BRIDESHEAD REVISITED' REVISITED
Christopher Hitchens

POLAND'S DEBT

WHY THE BIG BANKS LOVE MARTIAL LAW

JEFF FRIEDEN

On December 26, Citibank took a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* that depicted the company's headquarters in Manhattan as a giant candle. The advertisement quoted President Ronald Reagan's Christmas message of December 23: "Let the light of millions of candles in American homes give notice that the light of freedom is not going to be extinguished" in Poland. Poles, whether in power or in prison, would probably find the advertisement confusing, since the Polish government has had few better friends over the past decade than international lenders like Citibank.

Whatever the international financial community's views about the struggle for freedom in Poland, most of its members would agree with the new government in Poland that the country needs a strong dose of labor discipline, increased prices and reduced consumption. Shortly after Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski issued his proclamation of martial law, *The Financial Times* of London quoted a West German banker as saying, "I now see the chance for Poland to return to a more normal working schedule and this could be a good thing for the banks." Yves Laulan of the French Société Générale called martial law "a way of getting out of the impasse," and the Bank of America's Bernard Butcher said, "Whoever is running the country, we must wish them the best and hope there's some return to a productive economy."

The new regime no doubt welcomed the bankers' support. Long before martial law was declared on December 13, the Polish government was using its application for membership in the

(*Continued on Page 81*)

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LETTERS.

REPRESSION IN COSTA RICA

San Pedro Montes de Oca, Costa Rica

Aryeh Neier is to be congratulated for his cogent, point-by-point debunking of *The Wall Street Journal*'s efforts to justify further U.S. intervention in Central America ["Drawing the Line at *The W.S.J.*," *The Nation*, Nov. 14, 1981]. Nevertheless, I could not help but chuckle when he quoted former President José Figueres of Costa Rica on Jeane Kirkpatrick ("when she talks about us, she has not the faintest idea of what she is talking about"). Figueres is right, of course, but the comment might as well be applied to Neier himself when he describes Costa Rica as "an open society in which civil liberties are zealously protected."

Costa Rica changed dramatically during 1981, and there are signs of increasing repression. To mention only a few manifestations of this trend: the prohibition, since last January, on demonstrations in San José showing solidarity with El Salvador; the closing, last February, of the left-wing shortwave station Radio Noticias del Continente, after security forces planted weapons in station facilities; the deportation of numerous refugees and exiles from El Salvador and Guatemala for "subversive" activities; the machine-gun killing of a guerrilla suspect in her cell by a police corporal, and, finally, the repeated attempts by the media and the security forces to link the legal organizations of the Costa Rican left to "terrorism" and "foreign agitators."

During the Nicaraguan civil war, the powerful right-wing elements in Costa Rica were on the defensive, not wanting to be identified as supporters of Anastasio Somoza. The recent shift to the right in Costa Rica is the result not only of the fears of the conservative business circles regarding revolutions on the rest of the isthmus but also of the severe economic crisis that is gripping the country. Costa Rica is now essentially bankrupt; the currency has been devalued 330 percent in little more than a year, and the extensive social welfare programs to which Neier refers are gradually eroding or being dismantled. If the international lending institutions succeed in imposing an austerity program, as now seems likely, containing the resulting social dislocations may require further repression. It is an open question whether the half-dozen security forces that exist in "army-less" Costa Rica can do the job within the present democratic framework or whether something more severe will be required. Costa Rican democracy, long the pride of U.S. policy makers, is being threatened today not by Sandinist Nicaragua but by Ronald Reagan's myopic Central American policy, by his monetarist friends in the International Monetary Fund and by Costa Rican Reaganites.

Neier would be doing us a service if he raised his voice about the abuses of civil liberties in Costa Rica, rather than repeated clichés in response to the inane propaganda of *The Wall Street Journal*.

Marc Edelman

NEIER REPLIES

New York City

It is a pity that Marc Edelman failed to provide fuller information on the matters mentioned in his letter. In the case of the guerrilla suspect killed in her cell, for example, it is relevant that the government of Costa Rica, on its own initiative, asked the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to review what had taken place and to pass judgment. To my knowledge, this is the first time that any country anywhere in the world has waived domestic jurisdiction in a human-rights matter and asked an international judicial body to take jurisdiction (the court has referred the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for investigation while retaining jurisdiction).

Regrettably, no country is free of serious civil liberties abuses. Why Costa Rica deserves praise for its zeal in protecting civil liberties, however, is that it has developed effective independent machinery for dealing with abuses. The government's extraordinary action in submitting its own practices to an international court for judgment reflects this very well.

It is worth noting that Amnesty International's most recent annual report omits any discussion of Costa Rica. Only a handful of other nations—such as Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden—are similarly neglected. As is obvious, they are among the most affluent countries on earth, making it all the more remarkable that a poor country like Costa Rica should be included in this honorable company.

What Edelman says about the threat to Costa Rica stemming from its economic situation rather than from Nicaragua merely repeats, of course, what I wrote in my November 14 article.

Aryeh Neier

WALL STREET JOURNAL-ISM

Washington, D.C.

Aryeh Neier was right to take *The Wall Street Journal* to task for its propagandistic editorial of October 19, 1981, in his article "Drawing the Line at *The W.S.J.*" But Neier missed half the story. *The Journal*'s editorialist not only distorted the facts; he also offered as fact assertions he knew full well were untrue.

The editorial was prompted by the visit to New York City of four Salvadoran labor leaders who belong to a group called Popular Democratic Unity (U.P.D.). *The Journal* claimed that these men proved the popular legitimacy of the Salvadoran government; they face the "daily threat of death and in fact have all succeeded men who were murdered," the editorial said.

First, the predecessors of two, not four, of the U.P.D. leaders were killed. A brother of a third was killed. Second, *The Journal* neglected to mention that the families of the slain men are reasonably certain that the killings were carried out by government soldiers or right-wing death squads. The deliberate omission of these known facts makes the editorial's argument sound plausible when it is grotesquely illogical: because popular Salvadoran labor leaders stand up to death threats, *The Journal* urges its readers to support the government that has made—and carried out—those threats in the first place.

The editorial only quoted the U.P.D. leaders twice. One was quoted as saying, "The war involves 10 percent of the people with 90 percent in the middle," proving to *The Journal* that the Salvadoran war does not "result from an indigenous worker or peasant uprising." Of the Salvadoran opposition, an A.F.L.-C.I.O. official was quoted as saying, "They have the guns but they don't have the people." From this alleged evidence, *The Journal* concluded that "representatives of the common man are pleading for help in driving out what they know full well is a foreign-backed army."

This is a deliberate lie. The U.P.D. explicitly refuses to support the policies of Reagan and Duarte. At a Washington, D.C., press conference just days after their visit to *The Journal*'s New York City offices, the U.P.D. leaders said their organization represents "neither the government of El Salvador nor its opposition . . . much less the two extremes, the military and the guerrillas." The U.P.D. favors a "dialogue among the various parties to the conflict . . . a nonmilitary solution," said one U.S. labor leader. U.P.D. position papers state the same themes.

The U.P.D. officials came to the United States on their way back from Europe, where they had explored diplomatic openings for such a dialogue. In short, *The Journal* editorial informed readers that the Salvadorans supported the Reagan policy when, in fact, they were publicly pursuing an alternative to it.

The Journal refused to publish a letter pointing out the facts and declined to discuss the matter on the telephone. Americans for Democratic Action has filed a formal complaint about the editorial with the National News Council, and the council has agreed to take up the complaint at its March meeting.

Jeff Morley
Human Rights Law Project
Americans for Democratic Action

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EDITORIALS.

Ma Bell Settles

Although William Baxter, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Justice Department's antitrust division, thinks that much established antitrust law is "rubbish," he has always condemned one particular anticompetitive practice—the subsidization of unregulated or competitive elements of a public utility by its regulated segments. The classic example of a company that has benefited by this practice is A.T.&T., whose monopoly profits on telephone service have subsidized its more competitive activities.

On January 8, both sides of Baxter's philosophy were spectacularly displayed. He dropped the government's thirteen-year-old antitrust suit against I.B.M. because he thought the evidence was "flimsy." And he announced the out-of-court settlement of the seven-year-old A.T.&T. case. According to the terms of the settlement, most of the company's monopoly segments—twenty-two local telephone companies—were split off from the rest.

In both cases, the inevitable was accelerated. The chances of a government victory in the I.B.M. case were slim, whereas it was very likely to win big against A.T.&T. Federal District Court Judge Harold Greene, who presided over the A.T.&T. trial, commented last summer that the Justice Department had proved antitrust violations in the equipment and long-distance transmission markets. (On January 12, Judge Greene properly refused to approve the settlement until he has reviewed it and there has been time for public comment.)

A.T.&T. was very shrewd about containing the potential

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damage. By dropping local telephone service, it rids itself of the high-cost, labor-intensive and least efficient part of its business. Local telephone companies account for two-thirds of the communication giant's assets but only one-third of its profits. Moreover, many of them are embroiled in nasty regulatory battles as they seek billions of dollars in local rate increases. The "remnant" is a $44 billion company, the second largest in America. Bell will be allowed to keep its huge equipment subsidiary and its research arm, as well as the lucrative long-distance transmission operation. (If the case had been decided in court, it is likely that the judge would have ordered Bell to divest itself of Western Electric and Bell Labs.) A.T.&T. also gets to continue to publish its highly profitable yellow page directories, while turning the money-losing white pages over to the locals. And it is free to enter such markets as data processing, cable TV and equipment sales.

In return, A.T.&T.'s competitors in long-distance transmission get equal access to the local telephone networks, and equipment manufacturers get a better chance to sell their products to the local companies, although purchasing agents raised on the Bell religion may find it hard to switch.

A.T.&T. still controls 96 percent of the long-distance market—monopoly power by any definition—and it will still be allowed to use its revenues from this service to subsidize its more competitive activities. Competing data-processing companies remain dependent on Bell for the communications services they need to compete with it. And Western Electric will have a decisive edge in selling to the huge captive market for A.T.&T. equipment.

It is still too early to say what impact divestiture will have on local telephone rates. Predictions that they will soar are based on the conventional wisdom that long-distance services subsidize local operations, but Baxter and others dispute this. Earnings on the yellow pages and on the sale of customer equipment like telephones have also helped finance local service, but under the settlement these subsidies to local Bells will end. Nevertheless, A.T.&T. was already shifting a greater share of its costs to the local companies, which resulted in their asking for more than $3 billion in rate increases last year. Certainly the local companies will be able to collect substantial fees for access to their lines from all long-distance companies, including, of course, their former parent.

At this point, one thing seems clear. Both the telecommunications bill passed by the Senate last year, which was shaped to Bell's desires, and the Federal Communication Commission's decision in the "Computer II" proceeding, which permitted the company to offer data-processing and computer services through a separate subsidiary, have been rendered obsolete. Revised legislation will be difficult to pass, since A.T.&T. will now probably oppose it.

Finally, the outcome underscores the value of skillfully handled litigation. Former Attorney General Griffin Bell and others have criticized the Justice Department's handling of the A.T.&T. case and similar lawsuits because its aim was to restructure major segments of the economy. But without the present settlement, we would have had only legislation shaped by A.T.&T. or an F.C.C. regulatory ruling, neither of which imposed any meaningful controls on the Bell behemoth. Judge Greene's insistence upon reviewing the settlement and the possibility of Congressional action to modify it inject a note of uncertainty into the picture. But as it now stands, the agreement holds out the promise of increased competition in the communications, data-processing and equipment industries. We will be keeping a close watch on how the public's interest in all this is served.

Blitzed Again

The right giveth—the Administration's on-again, off-again restoration of tax-exempt status to segregated private schools (see cover editorial)—and the right taketh away, as in the case of an appropriations-bill rider that would deny CETA benefits to anyone who advocates the violent overthrow of the government. In both instances, the only principle involved is a callous disregard for constitutional rights.

The CETA rider was attached to the Senate appropriations bill at the end of 1980 at the behest of Representative Dan Daniel, a conservative Democrat from Virginia, and had the support of liberal Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire. Daniel went into high dudgeon after learning that two of his constituents, Dorothy and Allen Blitz of Martinsville, who were members of the Communist Workers Party, had CETA jobs. The rider was passed by a voice vote, but it was later dropped from the bill, along with a host of other "Christmas tree" amendments.

As we commented at the time [see "Item. Item. Item." *The Nation*, January 3-10, 1981], the rider punishes mere advocacy—speech. The logic that enables Congress to bar CETA funds to those who advocate revolution would also allow it to deny them other Federal services and benefits. Enforcing such a regulation would require a more active Federal Bureau of Investigation, and would bring in its wake a new generation of loyalty oaths and informers. (Asked about the enforcement problems, a Labor Department spokesman admitted that investigating every one of the 4 million or so participants in CETA programs would not be "cost effective" and that "self certification"—i.e., loyalty oaths—might have to be used.)

Now we've been blitzed again. The continuing budget resolution—a stopgap measure to fund government operations passed by Congress last December after it could not agree on a final budget—contains a provision stating that no CETA funds may be used "for the participation of individuals who publicly advocate the violent overthrow of the Federal Government." The continuing resolution expires on March 31, but the same language appears in the budget bill passed by the House and in the final appropriations bill that was reported out of committee in the Senate. The rider's resurrection took place under mysterious circumstances; there was no debate on it, and most members of both houses of Congress were not even aware it was there.

The last chance to head off this invasion of freedom of

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speech will come when the full Senate takes up the bill. If no senator objects, a step down the familiar road to McCarthyism will have been taken without a murmur of protest. Before that happens, we trust, opposing voices will be raised.

Two Yalta Myths

There are two myths about Yalta. The first, propagated by Franklin Roosevelt's early cold-warrior critics, suggested that an ailing President had "sold out" Poland and Eastern Europe by yielding to Joseph Stalin's demands. Now, in the wake of the Polish crisis, this first myth is being turned on its head. Liberal pundits, notably Robert Kleiman, a member of *The New York Times* editorial board, and Flora Lewis, a columnist for the same paper, have correctly observed that no agreement on spheres of influence was reached at Yalta in February 1945. But they dispel this first "myth of Yalta" in a manner that casts doubt on the de facto recognition of spheres of influence by the United States and the Soviet Union that has emerged since the war. The new myth is a very dangerous one in an age of first-strike nuclear weaponry.

On January 7, a signed piece by Kleiman appeared on the editorial page of *The Times* under the headline "Once More the Yalta Myth." Kleiman attacked the negative attitudes of some Europeans, especially West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, toward Western sanctions against the martial law regime in Poland. Kleiman correctly blamed Roosevelt's political enemies for starting the myth that he "sold out" Poland: "A generation ago, conservative Republicans spread it widely because they found it a useful way to discredit the Democrats among voters of East European origin." But he concluded that "East Europe's rights were indeed the issue at Yalta, but the West did not abandon them there." The implication is that Western intervention in contemporary Poland is permissible because no agreement on spheres of influence was reached at Yalta. Only in passing did Kleiman mention, "By the time of Yalta, Stalin's armies controlled most of Eastern Europe. The quarrels in the West, then and since, have turned more on what to say than what to do about that." How true.

The first myth about Yalta was concocted to denigrate Roosevelt's terms for postwar peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union (including the establishment of the United Nations, the plans for which were drawn up at the conference—one of its major achievements). The new myth, ironically put forth in the month of Roosevelt's birth 100 years ago, also tends to disparage policies of acceptance and caution. While it is true that no agreement on spheres of influence was reached at Yalta, since the war the United States and the Soviet Union have recognized a de facto line in Europe separating the East from the West. If either power should breach this line militarily, the other would regard this action as a *casus belli*. To cast doubt now on the validity of this tacit agreement is to ignore history. By word and deed, each superpower has repeatedly recognized the other's sphere of influence. Examples are so familiar they need only be cited briefly: the 1948 Berlin airlift; the U.S. decision to end de-Nazification policies in occupied West Germany in the early 1950s; the recognition of East Germany by Western powers in the early 1970s, and the West's nonintervention in the internal upheavals in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1967 and Poland in 1970 and 1976.

The facts about what happened at Yalta have long been available in official documents, statements of participants in the conference and books by objective scholars. Poland was not Roosevelt's to give away. By the time of the Yalta conference, Russian troops had pushed the Nazis out of most of Poland, and in a matter of weeks they had occupied the entire country. (They also occupied the Balkan nations.)

The Yalta agreements were concluded soon after the near breakthrough by the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge. In addition, at that time the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were in no position to take a successful completion of the atomic bomb project for granted, believed that unless the Russians agreed to declare war on Japan after Germany's defeat (as they subsequently did), the United States would suffer a million casualties or more in an invasion of Japan. In short, the Joint Chiefs opposed a diplomatic confrontation with the Soviet Union at Yalta. Agreement among the Allies was a military necessity. And when an agreement was reached, it was widely hailed by the press (including such conservative Republicans as Henry Luce) and the general public as a diplomatic triumph.

Just before the American delegation, of which I was a member, left Yalta, Secretary of State Edward Stettinius was standing with Gen. George C. Marshall outside our villa. Stettinius turned to Marshall, who had rarely left his desk in Washington during the war years, and said, "General, I assume you are very eager to get back to your desk." Marshall answered, "Ed, for what we have got here, I would have stayed a month."

That was the mood of the participants at Yalta. And I have no doubt today that we got as much as circumstances permitted.

Yet the myth that Roosevelt sold out Poland, widely disseminated by many Republicans at the same time that Joe McCarthy was exploiting the Communists-in-government issue, drew support from all manner of conservatives, including rank reactionaries, who joined lustily in the anti-Yalta chorus. Mounting cold-war sentiment made it difficult for accurate accounts of the Yalta agreements to counter the myth, with the result that many, perhaps most, otherwise well-informed Americans have until quite recently regarded Yalta as a dirty word.

Now the new Yalta myth could serve a similar purpose in the hands of those seeking to revive the cold war. Acceptance of this myth will make it all the more difficult to develop imaginative, effective policies designed to prevent a global confrontation of dangerous dimensions.

ALGER HISS

Alger Hiss is a practicing attorney who lives in New York City.

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DISPATCHES.

■ NICARAGUA-HONDURAS: The Dogs of War

The escalation of the fighting on the Honduran-Nicaraguan border has a suspicious aura of inevitability about it, suggesting that larger forces are at work. For example, is it only a coincidence that contingency plans recently drafted by the State and Defense departments describe a chain of events that are strikingly similar to those now taking place on this volatile border?

The contingency plans call for a U.S.-led naval blockade of Nicaragua to end what is considered an unacceptable influx of Cuban and Soviet arms, according to unnamed Reagan Administration officials cited on December 20 by *The San Francisco Examiner*'s knowledgeable Washington correspondent, John Wallach. But a blockade would be difficult to justify, the officials told Wallach, unless "it was connected to some uprisings in Nicaragua . . . unless parts of Nicaragua were taken by anti-Sandinist guerrillas." In that case, a blockade could be instituted to prevent "outside intervention" in Nicaragua's internal affairs. To encourage the uprisings, the contingency plans call for the United States to provide covert support to the former National Guardsmen and other Nicaraguan exiles attacking Nicaragua from camps on the Honduran border.

A plan does not a policy make, but the pattern of events strongly suggests that the resemblance between contingency and reality is more than coincidental. Nicaraguan exile leaders based in Honduras have told reporters that "the war against Nicaragua has begun." In the past month, frequent and more sophisticated attacks by the exiles along the frontier have left at least fifty Sandinist soldiers dead. The fighting has been especially fierce along the Coco River near the Atlantic coast, where, in one incident, anti-Sandinist marauders fired at a Nicaraguan helicopter, wounding the co-pilot and five soldiers, and then tried to shoot down the troop transport plane sent to bring back the wounded.

These incidents have seriously strained Nicaraguan-Honduran relations; indeed, Sandinist leaders in Managua fear that the current round of "counterrevolutionary" attacks is intended to provoke a war between the two countries. Over the past year, the Honduran high command—partly because of prodding from Washington—has adopted the view that Nicaragua's arms buildup represents a threat to Honduras. As a result, according to our contacts in Honduras, Nicaraguan exile bands are now getting aid from the highest echelons of the Honduran military, which seem increasingly willing to go to war with Nicaragua.

Whether or not the contingency plans described to Wallach are actually in operation, it seems clear that the Reagan Administration has embarked on a collision course with Nicaragua. The tensions on the border could provide the pretext for a Honduran-Nicaraguan war and for U.S. intervention.

■ CHINA: "The Disillusioned Army"

In the complex mosaic of Chinese politics, one pattern has emerged clearly in recent years: the People's Liberation Army (P.L.A.) is frequently at odds with Communist Party leaders over the direction of post-Mao China, and especially over the role of the military. Since 1976, party policy has dictated that agricultural, industrial and technological modernization take precedence over military modernization. Military spending has increased only slightly since Mao Zedong's death; then it was slashed 12.9 percent last year in a drive to reduce the government's deficit.

As a result of reforms enacted since 1976, the P.L.A. has lost many of the special privileges it enjoyed under Mao. Allowances for soldiers' families, routinely granted in the past, are now paid only in cases of extreme hardship, and discharged soldiers are no longer guaranteed government jobs.

The discontent of the P.L.A. with some of Vice Chairman Deng Xiaoping's reforms is no secret. In the past year, articles in the *People's Daily* and other publications have elliptically described the army's complaints. But the discontent of demobilized soldiers was revealed in the December issue of the Hong Kong magazine *Zheng Ming Yuebao*, which reported that 3,000 of them had staged an armed revolt last July 1 to protest their loss of privileges.

According to the magazine, recently demobilized soldiers, who called themselves "The Disillusioned Army," gatecrashed a mass rally in honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party being held in Meilu, a town thirty miles north of the port of Zhanjiang in Guangdong Province. The soldiers took the local party chief and other officials hostage, and thirty civilians were wounded in clashes between them and police. After three days of chaos in Meilu, the leaders of the group surrendered; no information is available on their fate. The *Zheng Ming Yuebao* report has been dismissed as false by Chinese officials, but Western diplomatic analysts in Peking cited by Reuters regard the magazine as a reliable source. The analysts also claim that similar, though smaller, organized protests may have occurred elsewhere.

One million soldiers are expected to be demobilized in China this year—partly to make way for better-educated recruits from urban areas. Since jobs for these soldiers are scarce, the ranks of the Disillusioned Army, if it still exists, may be swelling.

■ BRITAIN: The Throes of Labor

Assuming the role of peacemaker and unifier—a man for all factions—Labor Party leader Michael Foot declared in a New Year's message that his severely polarized party must encompass "a wide range of political attitudes" as "a true source of strength." Foot said he wanted "no purges." But his appeal for ecumenism did not reassure the party's left-wing activists who fear their excommunication has already begun. Nor did it convince the party's right-wing Old Guard, which insists that a purge of radicals is just what Labor needs to appeal to middle-class voters and to withstand a strong electoral challenge from the Social Democrats.

Labor's insurgent leftists, who have flocked to Member of Parliament Tony Benn's banner [see Kai Bird, "Will

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ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH AND STEPHEN TALBOT

Tony Benn Go All the Way?" *The Nation*, September 19, 1981], might be excused their skeptical response to Foot's no-purges pledge since it came only a fortnight after he led a clampdown on leftists who allegedly do not share the party's commitment to "parliamentary democracy." In mid-December, Foot urged the national executive committee to bar Peter Tatchell, a radical, from running as a Labor candidate for Parliament, and to launch an investigation of the Militant Tendency, a Trotskyist caucus within the party. Although Foot got his way, his margin of victory was wafer-thin. The vote on Tatchell was 15 to 14, and a subcommittee approved the probe of the Militant Tendency by 10 to 9.

Foot's opposition to Tatchell, who had been nominated by the Labor Party's leftist-controlled chapter in Bermondsey, one of London's poorest districts, stemmed from an article the 29-year-old grass-roots activist had written advocating "more militant forms of extra-parliamentary opposition which involve mass popular participation and challenge the government's right to rule." In a related move, another party subcommittee rejected the membership application of Tariq Ali, a well-known New Left leader in Britain in the 1960s. Ali had resigned from the Trotskyist International Marxist Group to join the Labor Party, calling it "the best vehicle for winning socialism in Britain," but his application was disapproved by a vote of 13 to 7.

Benn has promised to "fight [the] expulsions and proscriptions like a tiger." Although he does not share the Trotskyist views of the Militant Tendency, Benn said he would resist the purge "because we must show that we have a range of views inside the party."

But Benn's conservative opponents are pressing their offensive against "the Bennites and Trotskyists." They cite a Gallup Poll published last month in *The Daily Telegraph* which showed that Labor's support had slipped to 23 percent of the electorate, placing it in a tie with Margaret Thatcher's unpopular Conservative Party. The same poll showed that backing for the Social Democrat-Liberal Party alliance had risen to 50 percent. Twenty-five of Labor's 268 M.P.s, sensing a shift in the political winds, have bolted to the Social Democrats.

■ THAILAND: Crusading Colonel

Family planning specialists in Thailand, where abortion is illegal, estimate that every year more than 500,000 Thai women patronize illicit abortion clinics. Techniques used in the outlawed clinics include inserting plant roots and spraying toxic materials into the uterus to kill the fetus. Many women die as a result of the operations, and many others are rendered sterile.

Late last year, following a well-organized campaign by pro-abortion activists, the Thai House of Representatives passed by a vote of 70 to 3 a bill legalizing abortion when necessary "for the physical and mental health of the pregnant woman." But on December 19, the Thai Senate voted overwhelmingly against the legislation. If the House reaffirms its support for the bill within 180 days, it could still become law, but a powerful senator, who is a dogmatic Buddhist, has organized a Thai anti-abortion movement that is gathering adherents.

The senator, Col. Chumlong Srimuang, resigned his post as one of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda's closest aides to fight the abortion-rights bill. He argued in the Senate that abortion was morally wrong and that Buddhist self-discipline was the best way to prevent unwanted pregnancies. If the House now decides to vote against the bill, and observers say that it may well do so, the 500,000 Thai women who risk their lives in back-alley abortions this year will have the colonel to thank.

■ MOROCCO: All the King's Men

Morocco's King Hassan II began 1981 by proclaiming victory in his six-year war to annex the Western Sahara. He ended the year badly shaken after his army had suffered its worst defeat in the prolonged conflict with the guerrillas of Polisario, the Western Saharan independence movement. The beleaguered monarch will soon visit Washington at the invitation of President Reagan, who has encouraged Hassan's aggression in the Western Sahara by providing him with weapons (as did Jimmy Carter). The Reagan Administration has approved the sale of 108 M-60 tanks worth $182 million, but the sale has yet to be consummated. (The Moroccans reportedly can't make the payment, and are counting on Saudi Arabia to provide the money. The Saudis, however, have not committed themselves.) Emergency deliveries of military equipment were recently considered by the Administration, but were dropped in favor of sending advisers to train Moroccan forces.

Last October 13, Polisario guerrillas attacked a Moroccan garrison at Guelta Zemmour, and in what both sides have agreed was the largest battle of the war, Polisario shot down five Moroccan aircraft—a prized U.S. C-130 transport, two Mirage jets, an F-5 and a Puma helicopter. Hassan charged that the Polisario forces had used Soviet-built T-54 tanks and SAM-6 missiles.

The Reagan Administration views the conservative Moroccan regime as a useful ally in Africa and the Middle East, especially as a counterweight to Libya. It has dispatched a series of high-level emissaries to Rabat to assure Hassan of continued U.S. support, including Vernon Walters, a special assistant to Secretary of State Alexander Haig. And Haig himself plans to visit Morocco soon. But it is doubtful that all the President's men will be able to accomplish for Hassan what all the king's men have failed to do for six years: defeat Polisario and subjugate the people of the Western Sahara.

NEXT WEEK

Ronald Brownstein on A.T.&T. in the new information age. Also: Richard Falk and Mansour Farhang on Khomeini's repression in Iran.

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ARTICLES.

REAGAN'S NUKE PLAN

Life-Support System for a Terminal Patient

JOHN TIRMAN

Since Ronald Reagan announced his Administration's policy on commercial nuclear power last October, the nuclear power industry's woes have only multiplied: the plant at Diablo Canyon, California, was found to be unsafe; the ambitious program to build a five-unit nuclear complex in Washington State is on the verge of collapse; Three Mile Island needs a $1 billion Federal rescue; older reactors are showing signs of metal fatigue and will have to be replaced; the chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (N.R.C.) has warned that international safeguards against nuclear proliferation are inadequate.

Still, the Administration is determined to revive commercial nuclear power's sagging fortunes. Its policy statement, an unsurprising document which seeks to reduce regulation and to pour billions of dollars into the industry, was more remarkable for what it didn't say than for what it did. The prickly questions of reprocessing and waste disposal were officially ignored. The statement, prepared by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and released last October, contained little that was new and represented a vast commitment of scarce Federal funds. From its first major decision on nuclear power—the go-ahead on Tennessee's Clinch River breeder reactor—the White House has simultaneously expanded its backing of nuclear power while reducing its role in promoting conservation and the search for sources of renewable energy.

The Clinch River controversy is instructive. Most energy experts agree that breeders—large reactors that produce more plutonium than they consume—will not be needed in the foreseeable future. They are expensive—it would cost more than $10 billion to build a commercial-size reactor—and the plutonium produced is extremely toxic weapons-grade material. Jimmy Carter tried to stop the Clinch River project (not because he opposed the breeder concept but because he thought the reactor was a boondoggle), but he did not succeed, largely because of the efforts of Tennessee Senator Howard Baker. In this fiscal year, $648 million will be spent on breeder research and development. (Compare that with the $643 million appropriated for conservation and solar energy, a cut of 49 percent. And in fiscal 1983, the Administration reportedly would like to eliminate these budget items entirely.)

Though the budget appropriations and the dispute about the Clinch River reactor have been widely reported, fresh problems in the Administration's energy policy are now surfacing. One is the pivotal issue of radioactive-waste management. Although the high initial cost of building a nuclear reactor is the primary reason for the dozens of cancellations and deferrals of new construction in the past few years, the problem of radioactive waste will remain, no matter how many plants are built. The diversion of such waste and of enriched uranium also has international ramifications because it contributes to nuclear proliferation.

Nuclear waste comes in several varieties. Each phase of the nuclear fuel cycle, from uranium mining to final storage, involves radioactive waste. And the light-water reactors (L.W.R.s) of the country's seventy-two nuclear plants produce the largest proportion of that waste. L.W.R. fuel is a mixture of uranium-238 and uranium-235. During the chain reaction that ultimately produces nuclear energy, uranium-238 is slowly "transmuted" into plutonium-239 and plutonium-241, and uranium-235 is transmuted into other radioactive fission byproducts. In a typical 1,000-megawatt reactor, about thirty metric tons of fuel are transmuted each year in generating electricity, lowering the reactor's efficiency to the point where the fuel rods—the "spent fuel"—must be replaced. In the United States today, there are 6,000 tons of spent fuel, nearly all of which is stored in "pools" at the reactor sites. A total of 2,000 tons is generated every year. Spent fuel, it should be added, is highly radioactive and can, with sophisticated technology, be used to build a bomb. There are two things that can be done with this steadily accumulating spent fuel. One is to continue storing it in temporary facilities until a permanent repository is established, presumably in a stable geologic formation. The other is to "reprocess" it, extracting nuclear material that can then be used in new fuel rods.

The problems of reprocessing are monumental. The spent fuel contains large quantities of plutonium. Plutonium has a "critical mass" (the minimum quantity that will produce a chain reaction) of only twenty pounds, and so the amount needed to make a bomb can easily be carried by a thief. During reprocessing, radioactive gases are produced and released into the atmosphere, a practice that one government study predicts will kill 5,000 people in the next twenty years. Reprocessing also produces high-level liquid waste, in quantities one to three times the volume of the original spent fuel, which must be permanently disposed of. None of the methods for doing this have as yet been adequately tested.

Previous commercial attempts to reprocess spent fuel have not been successful. The country's only fully operational plant, in West Valley, New York, was plagued by technical problems and persistent off-site leaking, and it operated far below capacity. Other reprocessing experiments, notably a General Electric venture in Illinois, were even less successful. These hazards and failures con-

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vinced President Carter to suspend all reprocessing in 1977.

Ignoring this evidence, the Reagan Administration proposes lifting the ban on reprocessing spent fuel. It claims that an ambitious nuclear power program must have an assured fuel supply, and that reprocessing will provide it. But given the world glut of uranium, this is spurious reasoning. Indeed, an N.R.C. study last year noted that "uranium recovery and recycling would now be considered uneconomic." Reprocessing—and the development of breeder reactors—is simply illogical, given the nascent state of breeder technology, the unlikelihood of its economic viability and, of course, the increased danger of nuclear proliferation an extensive breeder/reprocessing industry creates.

The Administration's hopes of quickly reviving the nuclear industry will fail not only because of the wildly escalating costs of nuclear power but because of the poorly conceived waste-management scheme concocted by the Department of Energy. Carter's D.O.E. devised a simple way to deal with spent fuel—Away-From-Reactor (A.F.R.) storage. This plan recognized two crucial factors: that A.F.R.s must be built immediately, since many utilities are running out of on-site storage space, and that any Federal strategy for waste disposal must be worked out in cooperation with the states.

The Reagan Administration, however, has dispensed with A.F.R.s altogether. Instead of being stored, spent fuel is to be reprocessed. This would be carried out at a plant that is under construction at the Barnwell, South Carolina, nuclear-waste storage facility. The Administration expects the Barnwell plant to be running by 1985 under the management of Allied-General, a consortium of Allied Corporation and SG Associates, the latter owned by Gulf and Royal Dutch/Shell Group, which began building the facility in 1970.

There is just one hitch. Allied-General, having decided that the economic and technical risks of reprocessing are too great, has no intention of opening Barnwell. In a memorandum prepared for an April 23, 1981, meeting with Secretary of Energy James Edwards, Brian Forrow and Creighton Gallaway of Barnwell's parent companies wrote: "Prospects for further private investment in nuclear fuel reprocessing are so bleak as to be non-existent. The uncertainties are simply too great." In Allied-General's view, the risks are political: the Federal government could decide to scrap the project or the N.R.C. could impose tough safety standards that would drive the cost of building Barnwell—already running five times the original estimate—sky high. "No one in the private sector wants to put themselves in the position Allied has found itself in," explains Carl Walske, an executive of the Atomic Industrial Forum. "The industry is gun-shy." Indeed, Allied-General began to dismantle Barnwell last October in order to qualify for a Federal tax write-off.

To meet industry's objections, the Administration proposes to create a privately operated, publicly financed reprocessing facility modeled on Comsat, the quasi-governmental corporation created to regulate communication satellites. Industry insiders say that utilities, particularly smaller and underfinanced ones, will be strong-armed into becoming "private investors" in the facility. But regardless of the utilities' ultimate role, Barnwell will be built and operated with our tax dollars, and it will be financed "off-budget," a method the Administration rejected last year when it tried to kill the Consumer Co-op Bank and the Solar & Conservation Bank. Shortly after the possibility of a Comsat-style bailout was raised, the D.O.E. nuclear cadre floated another trial balloon: using commercial spent fuel in the production of nuclear weapons. That way, the enormous costs of reprocessing could be folded into the Pentagon's budget, which remains untouchable in Congress. The nation's electric utilities were horrified. The last thing they want is to be linked to the nuclear arms race.

Even if this political arabesque can be executed, another difficulty looms: Barnwell could not reprocess all the spent fuel accumulated each year in the United States. It could not even handle the average annual output of the light-water reactors currently in operation, much less that of the eighty to ninety new L.W.R.s expected to be on line by 1990. A new reprocessor would have to be built, something that the government has neglected to mention. Building another plant would take many years and more than a billion dollars. And, with the A.F.R. concept scrapped, temporary fuel storage will remain a problem.

Allied-General is not happy with the Comsat-style plan. In the April 23 memorandum, Barnwell's operators made their feelings clear: "The owners of [Barnwell] cannot envision any form of government support which would remedy the effects of existing prohibitions against private reprocessing . . . [the owners] will not provide any additional funding either to maintain the current R&D program or to operate the facility on a commercial basis. Furthermore, there is no foreseeable combination of regulatory reform

DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

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and Federal policy initiatives which would cause the owners to modify this position."

In addition to mismanaging the waste problem, the Administration expects to solve the industry's ills by attacking nuclear regulation. The industry and its political allies ritually blame N.R.C. licensing procedures for the soaring costs of operating nuclear plants. The licensing process is far from the morass of red tape the industry has accused it of being; nonetheless, for the nuclear "option" to survive, costs must be brought down precipitously, and the only solution the Administration has come up with is a drastic curtailment of the N.R.C.'s responsibility for safety.

Currently, a utility wishing to build a nuclear plant must secure a construction permit (after filing environmental-impact and safety reports, a process that takes about thirty months to complete). During this time, low-cost nonconstruction work can begin—site selection, plant design, contract bidding and the like—and, in most cases, limited work authorizations are granted about nine months before the construction permit is issued. It then takes about six years to build the plant. Some forty months before it's finished, the procedure for obtaining an operating license begins. A single plant, from inception to operation, takes approximately twelve years to complete.

The industry contends that most of the delays occur during the application process. But several studies have concluded that poor management practices, as well as the lack of site banking (preselection of power plant sites) and standard designs, which are not permitted under current N.R.C. rules, are the major sources of delay. An N.R.C. siting specialist, on the other hand, maintains that site banking and standard designs are neither safe nor efficient; he says that site banking is nearly useless in a country like the United States, which is in a constant state of demographic flux, and plant designs, in this geologically varied nation, must be site-specific.

The Administration nonetheless proposes to "streamline," in an as yet unspecified way, the licensing process in order to cut total building time to six years. But to decrease building time by more than a year or two, safety standards must suffer. "There just isn't that much fat in the routine," says a former N.R.C. official, "because it's a terrifically complex technology, and to review all the ramifications of each design takes time. Maybe six months can be trimmed from each end."

One of the industry's newest tactics is to challenge regulations passed in response to the accident at Three Mile Island. In an April 17, 1981, letter to President Reagan, for example, the Nuclear Safety Oversight Committee, a since-disbanded Presidential advisory body, harshly attacked the N.R.C. regulation requiring operating personnel to have a B.S. degree and sixty hours of technical training. Noting the current shortage of plant operators, the committee complained that "we doubt that NRC, or for that matter any governmental organization, has the experience or the competence to formulate direct regulatory measures in this area." Instead, the committee contended, the utilities should determine personnel qualifications. This contention runs counter to the findings of the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island, led by John Kemeny, and to the findings of the N.R.C.'s own investigation, led by Mitchell Rogovin. In May, a House subcommittee chaired by Representative Toby Moffett, Democrat of Connecticut, concluded after investigating a serious "incident" at New York State's Indian Point plant that the N.R.C. inspection system "is not capable of offering genuine assurance that the nuclear power industry is being safely operated." More important, perhaps, was the report's incisive comment on

WRITERS CONGRESS RECORD

'Censorship By Distribution'

"Our problem lies in too much central control of the media, in a cynical lack of concern for, or knowledge of, the cultural needs and wishes of this country, in editorial policy too often decided by the computer, and in nationwide distribution decided by God-knows-who.

"The writers and publishing staffs together are suffering from this frightened, shortsighted stupidity. Some of the most talented, articulate young people I have seen in twenty-seven years of publishing are working today in editing, sales and promotion, and they are as frustrated as the writers.

"The old respected publishing names mean little. It is as if MacDonald's bought The Four Seasons and secretly changed the menu without changing the name or the prices. Have the salesmen, the computers, the distributors and the belly editors forgotten that without writers and good young publishing talent they have no product? That if they are turning conglomerate publishing into one big cathouse, the girls get old? If they want the bottom line they keep asking for, here it is.

"Publishing is in danger of failure because, like the automobile business in Detroit, it is afraid to take chances, the industry is shot with deluded provincialism, and it is no longer satisfying the needs and wishes of the American public.

"We don't see the effects of censorship by distribution in New York, because there are hundreds of book stores where we can find what we want if we tramp the streets and take the trouble. This is not so (except for a few large cities) in the rest of the country. Let me give the most common example. Paperback books have now gone into the supermarkets all over the country. If you examine those shelves, and those in the airports too, you will see that they are dominated by prefabricated pop books."

—Mary Lee Settle, novelist,
American Writers Congress, October 9-12, 1981.

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the industry itself: "Those inadequacies in NRC's inspection program might not be a cause for concern if the evidence before the committee otherwise suggested that the nuclear industry is being consistently run in a highly competent manner. . . . Unfortunately, that is not the case."

Whatever decisions the Reagan Administration makes about how to finance the construction of nuclear-power plants and how to process or dispose of nuclear waste, the problems inherent in the technology remain. The plain and simple fact is that the cost of generating nuclear power, coupled with a recent decline in demand for electricity, has made the technology an obsolete dream. There is now a 30 percent excess peak-load generating capacity in the United States. And new energy-producing techniques like cogeneration are showing promising results, as are improved coal-combustion systems. Large-scale electrification via fission (or fusion) is simply a waste of the public's money.

But the President's fitful campaign to make nuclear power viable will march on. Perhaps no other aspect of his domestic program so clearly betrays the cynicism of the right wing: the promotion of nuclear power necessitates centralized bureaucratic power, the abrogation of state's rights, the circumvention of market economics and massive government spending. Nor can there be any question that the Reagan Administration's nuclear policy—with its fervent advocacy of breeder reactors, reprocessing and lax safety standards—will only intensify the dangers of nuclear proliferation.

As Representative Edward Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts, said at the time of the release of the Administration's policy statement, "President Reagan is hooking up a government life-support system to a dead industry." □

AT THE HEART, A VOID

Leavin' Scotland Afore Ye

JAMES CAMPBELL

Talking and drinking in my chilly Edinburgh flat late last month, some friends and I stumbled into a casual review of the year, recklessly summarizing how it had treated each of us. Then, since these things tend to merge into one another, we each began to speculate on our whereabouts a year hence. I said it was likely that I would be living in London; at any rate, I had made up my mind to leave Scotland. The only other Scot present, also a writer, guessed that by then he would have settled in France. There was little to keep him here, he said. "It's sad," another friend remarked later, "all this talk of leaving Scotland. It must be symbolic of something else."

I could not disagree. In any friendly game of word-association, "Scotland" would be most likely to be followed by "whisky," "kilt" and then something associated with beautiful scenery. If he thinks about it at all, the outsider envisions Scotland as a land of plentiful Scotch whisky, heather-purple hills and bad weather. He may recall Edinburgh, the capital, as a town dominated by a massive medieval castle, which for three weeks every year is the host of an international festival of the arts, and the rest of the time (if our hypothetical dreamer knows anything of Scottish history) is haunted by the small glories and pathetic failures of its past.

At first encounter, Edinburgh is irresistible. When he settled there in 1798, Sydney Smith, one of the founders of the *Edinburgh Review* and a renowned bon vivant, wrote, "I like this place extremely, and cannot help thinking that for a literary man, by which term I mean a man who is fond of letters, it is the most eligible situation in the island." There are many today who would still agree with this opinion. A recent literary history of the city was published to cooing choruses of applause and self-congratulation on the part of the heirs of "mine own romantic town," to use Walter Scott's unfortunate—but immortal—label.

Edinburgh may be viewed from several angles, however, and not all of them are flattering. The city's architectural beauty is unimpeachable, but there is a more complex neurosis deep in the personality of the place that extends out into the country as a whole. Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland, but it is difficult to say precisely what *sort* of capital since, being without a government, Scotland is not a state; nor can it be regarded as a mere province, since it retained separate legal, religious and educational institutions following the Union of the Parliaments in 1707. The official language is English, of course, but so deep are the prejudices in the Scottish mind that it is often thought necessary to apologize for those who write in the language they speak. The approved tongue is Lallans, an esoteric and somewhat artificial dialect. Like the national literature, Scottish history has been swamped by English history (or, as they call it in Scottish schools, "British" history; only the Scots insist on "British," while the rest of the world is content to believe that everything emanating from our united kingdom is English). In the school I attended while growing up in Glasgow, practically no Scottish history was thought to be worth teaching unless it concerned a military defeat at the hands of the English. In short, Scotland is a nation that is not a state, and Edinburgh, where it often seems that the clocks stopped in 1707, is no romantic town. It is, as Edwin Muir put it, "a blank."

I have lived in Edinburgh for more than seven years, most of them spent working as a freelance writer and editor of the *New Edinburgh Review*—successor to Sydney Smith's creation, if in nothing else but name and spirit—a quarterly periodical containing fiction, poetry and essays in literature, the arts and history. When I first arrived from Glasgow and began to form my own opinions about the Athens of the North, I experienced something quite new to me, which I can only describe as the feeling of being Scottish. Although I had always given what vocal and moral support I could

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muster to Scottish soccer teams and, when abroad, had spoken up whenever any Scot's integrity was in question, I did so automatically. Whatever pride I felt in being a Scot was a mere reflex of having been born here and not something I could possibly have earned, never having lived away from the place and having been brought up and put out to work at the age of 15 in one of Europe's grimmest industrial cities. But in Edinburgh, unlike Glasgow, the past is imperative, and sustained exposure to the city's cultural and historical monuments strengthened in me this new feeling of belonging to a distinct tribe with its own myths and traditions. It also fueled my curiosity as to where this sense of distinctness might lead and what, in the end, it would reveal about the country and about myself.

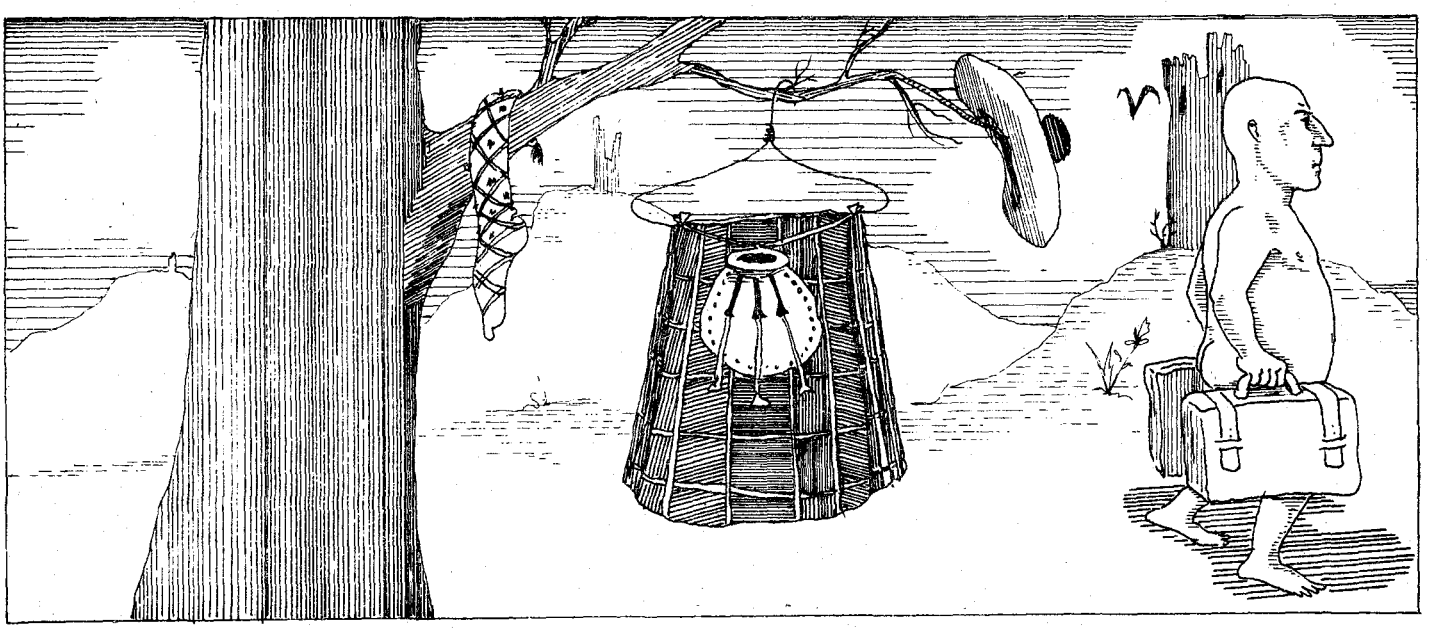
There is very little that is romantic attached to this feeling. Signs of Scotland's past are simply all around you in Edinburgh, in the shape of the castle and Holyrood House, in the pavements of the classical New Town, intended to be Britain's heavenly city but never completed, in the site of the old Parliament and also in the attitudes of the people toward these specters, attitudes that are deeply reverential in ways quite alien to inhabitants of the industrial west coast, Glasgow in particular.

Suddenly immersed in all this, I began to read Scottish history, about which I was naturally an ignoramus since, as I said, Scottish schools teach very little of it. How, come to that, can a politically disabled nation create a history for itself? I also began reading Scottish literature, generally regarded (as was American literature, until this century) as an infrequently flowering branch of English literature. And not least important was the start of my term of office as editor of the *New Edinburgh Review*, which placed me near the center of Scottish cultural life, forcing me to commission material relevant to the nation's unique problems.

One editorial difficulty in particular stood out as the issues of the magazine began to appear. This was the problem of finding good political articles about Scotland that did not rehearse tired arguments. Clearly, the dearth was not due simply to a lack of writers willing to apply themselves to political subjects; it was the result of a void in Scottish life precisely where politics ought to be.

This void is the most conspicuous thing about modern Scotland—not Edinburgh Castle, nor Holyrood House, nor Loch Lomond. Scotland cannot declare war, cannot grant aid; the people cannot urge their government to act because there is no government. Nobody bothers to ask what Scotland thinks about the neutron bomb, about the arms race, about Palestine or El Salvador; nobody bothers because even if there were an answer, it would not relate to anything in the realm of action. The unspoken laws by which Scotland is governed, the assumptions upon which its people act, are affected at one stage or another by this sense of unrelatedness. Consciousness of Scotland's incipient paralysis is bound to create an apathy in the hearts of the people that in turn affects them in every area of their lives. Sometimes it seems to me that since 1707, Scotland has been marking time around the place where its Parliament used to be, and that to lead a life in this country—particularly the life of "a man who is fond of letters"—is to circle endlessly around that empty site.

I am rather fond of the commonplace saying that the primary function of a writer is to write well and to contribute, in however small a way, to the vitality of a literature that helps the nation toward an understanding of its identity. This is a difficult enough task, to be sure, but the Scottish writer is confronted with extra problems, since to discover the "identity" of Scotland one must first define what it is not. It is not, for a start, a part of England, nor even of Great Britain, since that beast, like the Loch Ness Monster, doesn't really exist, except on paper. Lacking a government, Scotland's political possibilities are meager, to say the least; therefore its recent history, in terms of a role in world events, is insignificant. Under these conditions, the prospects for a thriving modern literature are pretty dismal. Writers of fiction seeking a political theme have to look either to the past or to the future. A great deal of contemporary fiction is about childhood—the adult writer's personal past. Even the best Scottish novel to be written for at



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least twenty years, Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*, published in 1981, was caught in this impasse. The novel was divided into two parts. One had a science-fiction setting, and the other was devoted to the hero's early years. Perhaps the figure most representative of the Scottish identity is one of its literature's most celebrated creations—Peter Pan.

In the minds of some, however, the notion of a Scottish identity has never existed. Politics being debarred, conversations about Scotland with outsiders can often circulate awkwardly around certain meaningless tokens of Scottishness, such as haggis or whisky or the bagpipes. The country's inability to act on its own impulses has led to a romance about Scotland as a land of lochs and mountains and a place to buy shortbread. At a dinner party in London recently, I found myself seated beside a pleasant young English woman who told me that she had always had a great love of all things Scottish. When she added that she had never set foot in the place, I naturally pressed her to tell me how she might have acquired this love. She supposed that she must have inherited it from her mother, who was "really Scottish." Whenever her mother had a few drinks, she would inevitably start dreaming aloud of her true home: "You know: the glens, pipers, tartan—all that kind of thing."

This kind of sentimentalism is all too familiar to me, but I tried, as gently as I could, to explain to my new friend that romantics of this kind, who often have spent their entire stay in Scotland at English-owned country estates, were anathema to a Scot. Praising glens and tartans was rather like telling a black American how much you enjoyed minstrel shows.

It is not only foreigners who are at fault, of course. The Scots are perfectly capable of patronizing themselves in ways that are sometimes stupid and sometimes pernicious. I remember a meeting of a local literary society at which, along with some other editors, I was asked to take part in a discussion on "The Role of the Literary Magazine in Scotland." After I had, in all innocence, described my editorial policy on fiction and poetry as publishing "the best available," which should have been obvious enough, the editor of a small poetry magazine surprised me by protesting. She said that since Scottish writers deserved encouragement, she would publish a second-rate Scottish poem before a first-rate English one. There was no adverse reaction to this from the audience, and when I feebly retorted that this only proved her to be in love with Scottishness and not poetry, I received no support.

Although vain and arrogant gestures like hers aid no one except a few bad poets, she helped me to understand the contradictions, and the desperation, besetting the mind that immerses itself in the dream of an independent Scotland.

One can never really get out of the relationship between oneself and one's country. My departure has nothing to do with escaping hopefully to somewhere else, and certainly nothing to do with the irresistible allure of London. It comes from a wish to place a distance between myself and the blank. There is a universal dimension to identity which the blank refuses, or perhaps is unable, to admit. □

CHILD-CARE TAX CREDIT

Heaven Help the Working Mother

JILL NORGREN AND SHEILA COLE

Two recent events exemplify the neglect of child-care and family policy in the United States today. Last August, the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued a report entitled "Child Care and Equal Opportunity for Women," which concluded that the lack of a "cohesive or well-articulated" child-care policy in the United States has reduced women's job opportunities. The commission found that the various child-care programs supported by the Federal government were "inadequate to meet the current or projected need." As a result, "Women as workers and students, especially minority women, continue to be disadvantaged when compared with men." Women have more trouble finding work than men do, and the jobs they find are often low paying and offer few opportunities for advancement. Women are less likely than men to receive advanced training, and they are underrepresented in Federal employment and training programs.

A few weeks before the report was issued, several members of Congress, including Republican Representative Barber Conable of New York and Senators David Durenberger and Howard Metzenbaum, sought to amend the child-care tax credit in the Internal Revenue Code, which is skewed in favor of middle-class parents. But Conable et al. were forced at the last moment to include their proposed changes in President Reagan's tax package, and the reforms that were ultimately passed were modest. The level of child-care expenditures that may be computed in arriving at the tax credit was raised from $2,000 to a maximum of $2,400 for families with a single child, and from $4,000 to a maximum of $4,800 for families with two or more children. The credit will now be based on a limited sliding scale. Families with incomes of $10,000 or less may take a credit of 30 percent of their child-care costs up to the $4,800 ceiling; families with incomes of $28,000 or more are limited to a 20 percent credit. Efforts to index the child-care tax credit to inflation and to include tax refunds for families with incomes too low to use tax credits failed to win legislative approval.

At these rates the maximum tax credit would be $1,440. But only a family with two or more children whose child-care costs totaled $4,800 and whose annual income was less than $10,000 would qualify. And, after collecting their refund, they would still have paid out $3,460 for child care, leaving them about $6,000 to live on.

Jill Norgren is an associate professor of political science at John Jay College of Criminal Justice who writes on social policy issues. Sheila Cole is a journalist whose most recent book is Working Kids on Working *(Lothrop, Lee & Shephard).*

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While these minor revisions of the child-care tax credit are welcome, they cannot possibly redress the inequities documented in the Civil Rights Commission's report. What is more, tax credits, however generous, are a limited tool for making child care affordable to those who need it. Families must pay for child care for one year and collect their refund the next. And there is no guarantee that day-care facilities are available for those who most need them, or that they meet state health and safety standards. Many women, as the Civil Rights Commission found, are forced to stay home and care for their children or to work in low-paying, part-time jobs because they cannot find adequate child care. Finally, many families do not know about the tax credit.

The large number of families that are not helped by the tax credit is revealed by the following statistics: approximately 7 million working women have children under the age of 6, but only 3.9 million families filed claims for the child-care deductions in 1979. To make matters worse, subsidies for child care to welfare or poverty-line families in the 1982 Federal budget have fallen to 1968 levels, even though hundreds of thousands of additional mothers have entered the work force since then.

Only ten years ago, the Comprehensive Child Development Act was passed by both houses of Congress, although there was not enough support to override President Nixon's subsequent veto. In his veto message Nixon said that the law would "commit the vast moral authority of the national government to the side of communal approaches to child-rearing. . . . We should enhance rather than diminish both parental authority and parental involvement with children . . . particularly in those decisive years when social attitudes and a conscience are formed and religious and moral principles inculcated." Since that time, all Congressional efforts to develop government-sponsored comprehensive child-care programs have failed. Senator Alan Cranston of California, who introduced the most recent legislation in this area, withdrew his bill from committee in 1979 after two years of hearings, explaining there was no chance it would pass. No further initiatives are planned in Congress.

The current tax credit was adopted by Congress in part as a way of avoiding charges of government intervention in child rearing. Defenders of the credit in Congress say that it helps working parents cover the cost of child care without specifying what kind of care is involved, and that it requires no direct Federal appropriations. But whatever its virtues, the tax credit remains an inadequate solution to the problems of working parents in this country.

With Reagan in the White House, government intervention in child-rearing decisions is not as distasteful to Washington as it once was. The Family Protection Act, introduced in the Senate by Paul Laxalt of Nevada, the President's friend and supporter, and Roger Jepsen of Iowa, would, if enacted, establish considerable government control over the ways in which children are raised and cared for in the United States [see Rhonda Brown, "Blueprint for a Moral America," *The Nation*, May 23, 1981]. Committing the "vast moral authority of the national government" to

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supervising child rearing is, it seems, a matter of whose moral values are being applied.

This country—and its working mothers—need a well-articulated child-care policy. In the short run, those who advocate such a policy may have to settle for adjustments that make the tax credit slightly more equitable. But the larger issue remains. Only a strong political coalition can bring about changes in social policy. Child-care advocates, women's groups and organized labor should unite. By converting a women's issue into an economic issue, they will attract broader support. □

50 YEARS OF THE I.E.A.

A Classic Cartel In Action

KURT RUDOLF MIROW AND HARRY MAURER

One cartel today epitomizes the classic breed: the International Electrical Association. No other organization so perfectly embodies what one might imagine an ideal cartel to be, and other I.E.A. attributes make it a fascinating object of study as well. In the first place, it has lasted for half a century in much the same form as when it was founded. It controls trade throughout the world in a branch of manufacturing—heavy electrical equipment—of great importance to developed and developing countries alike. It includes virtually all the industry's major corporations (in 1977, the most recent year for which information is available, the I.E.A. was composed of fifty-five members from twelve countries). It is a completely private group, handling annual sales of about $2 billion. Yet it pretends to be a simple trade association and camouflages its real activities behind a facade of statistical and market research. Its officers and member firms, on the rare occasions when they will talk about the I.E.A. at all, refuse to admit it is a cartel, even when confronted with documentary evidence that leaves no doubt as to the truth.

Ironically, the very existence of that evidence is another fact that makes the I.E.A. worthy of extended attention. Private cartels, for obvious reasons, are totally secretive. Except for the rare instances when they become the objects of government investigations, or the even more unusual cases when information leaks to journalists or other citizens, cartels operate in obscurity. The sheer longevity of the I.E.A., however, probably made it inevitable that the group's wall of secrecy would be breached—as it has been, more than once. The sum of these revelations is a picture of I.E.A. operations that, although not complete, is uncommonly rich in detail.

Like all cartels, the I.E.A. exists for two purposes: to keep prices for its products as high as possible, and to keep its members' share of the market as large as possible. That sounds simple enough. But for a cartel whose goal is to monopolize markets in scores of countries and whose products are heterogeneous, costly and technologically complex, the obstacles to success are formidable. Fifty years is a very long life span for a formal cartel of such scope. How has the I.E.A. managed to flourish for so long? The secret of its success is that the fundamental agreements of the cartel establish principles that apply to every situation, but the accords covering specific products are highly flexible. The cartel can change to fit changing circumstances, and so it has.

But the agreements themselves can also be deceptive. With few exceptions they are limited specifically to export markets in the less-developed countries. The I.E.A.'s field of operations thus would appear to exclude its members' home countries—most of Europe and Japan—as well as the United States, for reasons of antitrust law. The territorial limits actually reflect the old system of home-market protection, established long before the I.E.A.'s immediate precursor was created by the International Notification and Compensation Agreement, which was signed in Paris in 1930 by nine of the world's largest electrical equipment manufacturers. Under home-market protection, the cartel members tacitly agree not to invade one another's local markets. In fact, however, the cartel's reach extends much farther than the agreements indicate. There is evidence that the cartel has seriously harmed the American electrical industry since the U.S. members, G.E. and Westinghouse, were forced by the government to withdraw from it following World War II. The major U.S. firms reportedly find themselves at a sharp disadvantage in competing with cartel members for exports of heavy equipment, and there are indications that in recent years the loss of competitive edge has even weakened American firms at home, allowing the European and Japanese cartel members to take over important sectors of the U.S. market.

Here we confront the difficulty of assessing the specific effects of the cartel. Leaked documents tell us what the I.E.A. hopes to accomplish and how it plans to do so; but information revealing the degree of its success remains fragmentary. Nevertheless, we believe there is enough evidence to support the view that the I.E.A.'s impact on the heavy electrical industry both in developed and Third World countries is substantial.

The major example of detailed commercial accounting that has leaked from the cartel to date is a document obtained by Dr. Barbara Epstein, an economist working for the New York City consulting firm of Horace J. DePodwin Associates. The document lists the orders obtained under Agreement P(H)C (the pooling and compensation accord covering transformers—Section H, in I.E.A. parlance) from May 19, 1965, through December 31, 1967, and the conditions under which those orders were won. The figures in the P(H)C

Kurt Rudolf Mirow is a Brazilian manufacturer and author of A Ditadvia dos Cartéis *(1977). Harry Maurer has written widely about Latin America and transnational corporations. This article is excerpted from their forthcoming book,* Webs of Power: International Cartels and the World Economy *(Houghton Mifflin).*

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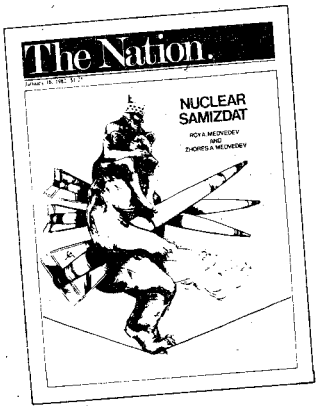

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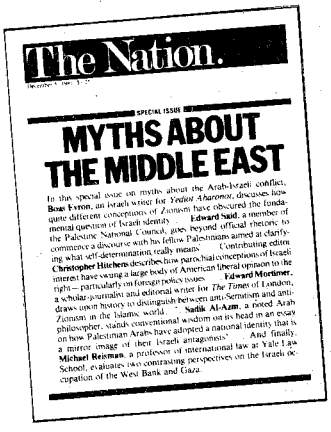

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document permit a reasonably accurate measure of the effects of the cartel's restrictive practices on transformer prices.

Cartel members dominated the market during the years in question. In 1965 they captured 77 percent of world exports; in 1966, 72 percent; and in 1967, 86 percent. Their sales also evidence a consistent pattern of charging higher prices to buyers in the Third World than to those in developed countries. New Zealand, for example, placed ten orders during this period, although prices are available for only nine. On only two of those orders did the buyer pay more than the reference price (the cartel's ideal minimum). For the other seven, the prices paid averaged less than 75 percent of the reference price. Other developed countries also usually paid less than the reference price. Kuwait, on the other hand, placed five orders for a total of twenty-seven large transformers and paid an average of over 20 percent more than the reference price. Venezuela bought seventy-nine transformers, with only nineteen of them discounted below the reference price—and the discounts were tiny. The other sixty were acquired at a premium, often a hefty one; seven of the transformers, for example, cost 238 percent of the reference price. Korea, Yugoslavia, the Philippines and India were similarly overcharged. Interestingly, Brazil, between 1965 and 1967, bought thirteen transformers (all in one order) and paid only 78 percent of the reference price for them, thus countering the pattern for Third World countries. This may be accounted for by the fact that from 1965 through 1967, Brazil was in a deep recession, with capital in short supply, and it was therefore unwilling or unable to pay high prices for capital goods. Another factor, however, could be the founding of a subcartel in Brazil in 1964; the members there might well have had an interest in selling cheaply to undercut local competitors.

The transformer order lists also make it possible to measure the effect of different competitive situations on the cartel's prices. Beside the notation for each order there is a space marked PC, OT or SA, or left blank. The codes reveal the type of agreement in operation on each order. PC stands for "pool canceled," a measure taken when outsiders are also bidding and the cartel members feel the necessity to lower their prices by dispensing with the 7 percent pool payments. SA means "special arrangement," something undertaken in Section H when the members are determined to win an order at any cost and face dangerous outside competition; it involves, in other words, even more drastic price cutting than when the pooling arrangement is simply canceled. OT means "only tenderer," indicating that only one firm has been invited to bid. When the space is left blank it means that normal procedures prevail: the pool is in operation, and the members have reached agreement on how to bid the order.

These different situations would lead one to expect higher or lower prices according to the degree of competition. Prices would tend to be lowest when special arrangements are in effect, reflecting the cartel's resolve to underbid outsiders. Pool-canceled arrangements would lead to somewhat higher prices, since the cartel members face outsiders but

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have not chosen (or have not been able) to adopt a policy of all-out attack by jointly slashing prices; therefore they are likely to bid close to what they think the order is actually worth. When normal cartel arrangements are in effect, the price would be expected to be higher still, because it must include the cost of the pool, compensation payments to members not awarded the contract and whatever extra profits the members feel they can achieve by colluding on the bid. But the highest price of all would come on orders for which there is only one bidder, who is free to charge whatever the market will bear.

In practice, the prices obtained by Section H conformed almost perfectly to these predictions. On pool-canceled bids, which most closely approximate what competitive conditions would be in the absence of a cartel, the average price paid was almost identical to the reference price: 98.3 percent of it, to be exact. Prices dropped sharply for deals concluded under special arrangements, rose when the pool was in effect, and were extremely high when on' one bidder was involved, averaging 148.2 percent of the r' ence price. It is also worth noting that, no matter what the situation, developing countries paid much more than advanced countries for transformers—an average of 129.4 percent of the reference price as opposed to 97.2 percent for the latter group.

The data from Section H suggest that the I.E.A. succeeded in raising prices on its sales by some 15 percent to 20 percent. Unfortunately, these figures are now fifteen years old, and no more recent information is available. There is no way of knowing whether price increases achieved by the cartel today are of the same magnitude, or smaller, or even larger. Also, the figures outlined above apply only to transformers, so they may or may not be representative. But if we assume for the moment that they are and assume likewise that the total annual value of sales covered by I.E.A. agreements has remained at the 1976 level of $1.5 billion, then we may conclude that the "price maintenance" practiced by the cartel costs the world at least $225 million to $300 million per year, most of it paid by the less-developed countries.

Specific instances of cartel overpricing tend to surface, of course, only when something goes disastrously wrong. There apparently was one such instance recently in Saudi Arabia. Ever since the OPEC price increases of 1973, the Middle East has been the most important growth market for heavy electrical equipment in the world, and Saudi Arabia, with the possible exception of Iran under the Shah, has been the leading consumer nation in the area, not only of electrical equipment but of other large-scale industrial and civil engineering projects. After some years of liberal spending, however, the Saudis came to feel they were being regularly cheated by firms that inflated their prices. The resentment finally erupted in 1977, when the Saudis were planning a huge enlargement of their electrical power system and invited tenders for transformers, power lines, diesel generating sets and switchgear, all covered by contracts of the I.E.A. or the International Cable Development Corporation, the cable cartel. Of the eight firms invited to bid, six—General Electric Co., Ltd., Hawker-Siddeley, Siemens, Brown Boveri, Hitachi and Mitsubishi—were members of the I.E.A. The Saudi consultants estimated the value of the equipment at some $1.4 billion. The exact amounts of the bids are not known, but the Saudis revealed to the press that they ranged from two to four times the independent estimates.

On February 23, 1977, the Saudi Council of Ministers issued a stinging denunciation of the companies involved, claiming they "have agreed to fix the price of their bids to share in illegal profit" with the winners. The eight original bidders were eliminated from consideration for the projects, and the Saudi minister of industry and electricity pointedly toured the Far East looking for other bidders. He eventually awarded the contracts to companies in India, Pakistan, South Korea and Taiwan, whose bids were markedly lower than the lowest of the first round. Dr. Feisal Bashir, acting deputy minister of planning, expressed hope that the European and Japanese firms would learn a lesson from the experience and would in the future be aware, as he put it, that "we are not easy meat."

But usually matters are not so clear-cut; the indications of cartel action on any particular contract are rarely so extreme—and are not aired in public. The circumstances that led Saudi Arabia to react so strongly were probably unique, the most important being the bargaining power bestowed on the Saudis by their oil wealth. Few other Third World countries are in a position to offend rich and powerful transnational corporations that are the traditional (and often the only) source of sorely needed technology and that customarily pay huge "commissions" to local "agents" who help them win contracts. □

Martial Law

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) to bring the Fund's prestige behind new austerity measures. As one Polish official noted at the time, "The people are more willing to listen to the doctor from Washington than the doctor from Warsaw."

It is a cardinal rule of banking that a small loan gains a bank a debtor, and a large one gains a bank a partner. With some $16 billion in outstanding debts (Poland also owes $11 billion to Western governments), the international banks have acquired an important partner. Indeed, many of the Polish government's problems can be traced to its attempts to meet the insistent demands of the country's creditors.

This ironic and complex collaboration between Western capitalists and Eastern European Communists began after the 1970 uprisings that brought Edward Gierek to power. To make good on his promises of higher living standards, Gierek initiated a massive program aimed at revitalizing and

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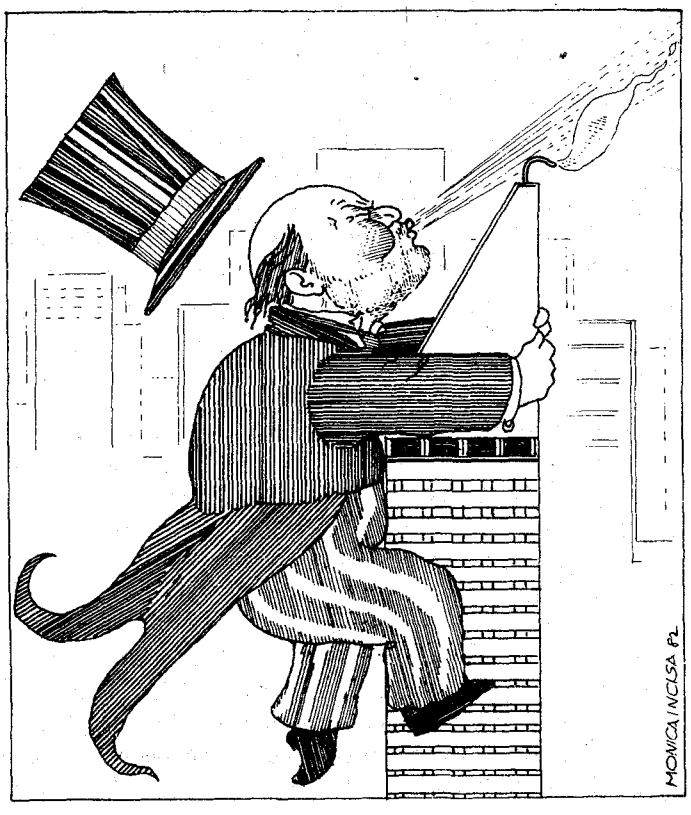
expanding Polish industry. Half of the factories now operating in Poland were built after Gierek's industrialization drive got under way in 1971. Gierek might have financed the expansion by raising consumer prices, but this was politically impossible. And so he turned to Western banks, suppliers and governments for credit. Between 1973 and 1976, Poland's debt to the West rose from $1.6 billion to $11.5 billion, with the borrowed funds going mostly to build new factories and modernize old ones.

The willingness of European, Japanese and North American banks to extend credit to Poland required their overcoming a long-standing aversion to lending money in Eastern Europe. This reluctance had its origins in the so-called Rhine syndrome, the predilection of countries east of the Rhine to repudiate or default on their international debts. Among the delinquents were Russia in 1917, almost all of Eastern and Central Europe in the 1930s and several Eastern bloc nations after World War II. But in the early 1970s, the bankers' memories of past defaults faded as the bankers became dazzled by the rosy glow of détente. More important, they were awash in Eurodollars and hungry for new borrowers.

The reasoning on both sides of the teller's window was the same. Poland would borrow from the banks and use the money to build factories equipped with the latest technology and staffed by disciplined and relatively cheap Polish labor. The factories would pay for themselves by exporting a portion of their output to the West, and the bankers would be assured of their interest payments. By the end of 1975, the system seemed to be working. The Polish gross national product was 59 percent higher than it had been in 1970, real wages were up by 40 percent and more than half the country's imports were from the West.



Yet by 1976 Poland's socialist reindustrialization had become a victim of the capitalist recession, disproving Benjamin Franklin's dictum that "no nation was ever ruined by trade." The market for Polish goods in the West was depressed, and recession-inspired protectionist measures were shrinking it even further. With an enormous debt to pay off, Poland had no choice but to reduce imports from the West. Once again the regime tried raising prices on Western goods to discourage consumption, but a wave of strikes and protests broke out and the increases had to be rescinded. In desperation, the government deliberately slowed economic growth, hoping to reduce imports of machinery, spare parts and components needed for the factories financed by the loans. According to Lynn Turgeon, a professor of economics at Hofstra University, the government believed that "the slowdown was necessary to 'cool off' an overheated socialist economy, and was no doubt encouraged by Western banks holding Polish obligations."

With more and more hard currency going toward interest and principal payments, and less and less toward crucial parts and materials, factories were eventually operating at a fraction of their capacity. By late 1981, the huge Polkolor color television plant near Warsaw, for example, using RCA and Corning equipment and dependent on imported picture-tube components, was running at less than one-tenth of capacity. The G.N.P. dropped by 2 percent in 1979 and 3 percent in 1980.

Finally, in the summer of 1980, under heavy pressure from Western banks, the Polish government again tried to raise consumer prices and reduce the $6 billion subsidy for consumer goods. The results were more riots and the rise of Solidarity.

As Western bankers looked on in horror, Poland's economy slowly disintegrated. In 1981, the G.N.P. dropped 30 percent, exports were down by one fifth from the previous year and the foreign trade deficit was estimated at more than $3 billion. In a series of meetings last summer with Polish officials, representatives of eight large Western banks demanded that Poland make a commitment described by the publication *Euromoney* as "unprecedented in the role it would assign to commercial bankers in monitoring the rebuilding of the Polish economy." The banks were to have direct access to top Polish economic policy makers and to detailed information about Poland's economy, an unheard-of concession for a socialist country, and they received assurances of what one banker called "a very, very austere import program for 1982."

To far-sighted financiers it was readily apparent that only strong government action could impose such austerity on an unwilling populace. Hence the welcome to the December 13 crackdown already mentioned. As one European banker commented bullishly: "One must ask, 'Is the Polish economy more viable now than it was previously?' The answer may be yes." And as Citibank's Thomas Theobald said, "The only test we care about is: can they pay their bills?"

Were Poland simply another insolvent Third World na-

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tion, the reaction of the bankers—and of the U.S. government—would be a predictable mix of benevolence and understanding. As has been the case with Chile, the Philippines, Argentina, South Korea, Turkey and other countries, they would commend the government for its tough-mindedness, allow additional loan-payment extensions and ultimately welcome the black sheep back into the fold. But Poland is not a U.S. ally. The banks' freedom to endorse the Polish government's austerity measures is hampered by the realities of international politics. It is one thing to rail against the dangers of popular uprisings when the government under fire is a reliable Western friend like Argentina or South Korea, and quite another to throw wholehearted support behind a Communist government facing a similar upheaval. And when a strong stand against the Polish regime is an essential component of the Administration's militant anti-Sovietism, the bankers must tread warily.

Furthermore, the bankers realize that the relatively privileged position labor enjoys in Polish society makes the "soak the poor" policies they recommend in the Third World unrealistic. Poland is not yet a member of the I.M.F. (although a five-man team from the Fund arrived in Warsaw two days before the crackdown), and, in any event, the influence of this international financial policeman is limited in the Soviet bloc. And as a socialist country, Poland can simply cut all economic ties with the West and retreat into the austere but secure self-sufficiency of Comecon, the Eastern European trade bloc. Yet such a rupture is unlikely, since it would mean that other socialist nations desiring to do business with the West would be hurt. It would also undermine détente with Western Europe, which the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries are eager to maintain.

International lenders—especially in the United States—want to continue to put pressure on Poland and to concede as little as possible in order to prod Moscow into footing its insolvent ally's bills and to assure smaller banks that have made loans to Poland that they are protecting their interests.

Western banks have loaned money to Eastern Europe with the implicit assumption that loans to Comecon nations are guaranteed by the Soviet Union. The Russians realize that the default of one socialist country would undermine the international credit standing of all of Eastern Europe, including the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union has vast supplies of oil and gold which can readily be converted into hard currency, so it is reasonable to regard Moscow as the silent cosigner to its Comecon partners' loans.

There are indeed indications that the financiers' pressure has worked, for the Soviet Union has poured some $6 billion, over $2 billion of it in hard currency, into the Polish economy over the past year. Many Western bankers hope that by maintaining a hard line toward the Polish government, they will force an even greater Soviet financial rescue operation.

Another reason the large banks are taking a hard line is that Poland owes money to some 500 banks, many of which are relatively small and have little international experience. The large international banks can afford to mark time until the smoke in Poland clears, but the smaller banks may become anxious and declare Poland in default. This move would enable them to attach Polish assets abroad (ships, aircraft, bank deposits and the like).

Such a step would pose a serious problem for the large banks. All international loan agreements contain a "cross default clause." Under this provision, when a lender declares a borrower in default, all lenders may seek to recover their money. A declaration of default by one small bank might lead to a stampede to grab Polish assets and eventually scuttle the larger banks' hopes of preserving their privileged position in Eastern Europe. The hard line, therefore, serves to prove to the smaller banks that their interests are not being sold out.

So while the bankers may secretly hope that Poland's martial-law government succeeds in restoring order and getting the country back to work, they are unable to do much to support their friends in Warsaw. If the banks ease their pressure, giving the impression that they will permit the Polish government to reschedule its debts, the Soviet Union will feel less compelled to provide a bailout. Should the larger banks appear to be relenting, some of the smaller banks might declare Poland in default and bring the whole Polish debt structure tumbling down. Finally, if the banks express sympathy for the Polish regime, they risk reprisals from the Administration.

The picture is further complicated by divisions among the bankers themselves. Many European—and especially West German—bankers appear to prefer taking a softer line toward the Polish regime than their American counterparts. The German banks, with $4.5 billion in outstanding loans to Poland, are more heavily exposed than the banks of any other country. Some 40 percent of these loans were guaranteed by the German government as a way of encouraging exports to Poland. Thus, any eventual losses on this portion of the debt will be paid for by German taxpayers. These banks, which have very close ties to German industries that rely on trade with the East, do not want to force Poland, or the Soviet Union, into an intransigent position that might endanger the delicate structure of East-West trade. In fact, the Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft, the financial institution with the most to lose (it has loaned Poland more than $750 million), is owned by trade unions that strongly support the policy of *Osthandel* (trade with the East) because it creates jobs for their members.

Even the nine major American banks that hold three-quarters of Poland's $2 billion debt to U.S. concerns differ on what approach to take. Some prefer the European-style soft line. Most, however, seem unconcerned about the effects a Polish default would have on trade, since U.S. exports to the Soviet bloc represent a relatively insignificant portion of total exports. These banks are unwilling to take a chance that the Poles will be able to come up with the money. The precedent here is Jimmy Carter's freezing of Iranian assets, from which most U.S. banks profitted.

In short, the European bankers have no choice but to give the Polish regime the benefit of the doubt; besides, as one said, "We wouldn't know where to begin looking for assets

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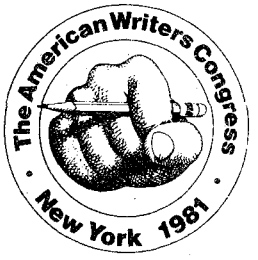

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to grab." The American bankers would rather get as much as they can from Poland before the country falls apart, or force the Russians to pay the Polish tab.

Despite their disagreements, most bankers on both sides of the Atlantic are disturbed by Reagan's economic sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union. Poland's creditors realize that one of the chief prerequisites of the country's economic recovery is the availability of cheap food for urban workers. "It is almost past belief," wrote *The Financial Times*' Ian Davidson last month, "that President Reagan should have suspended food aid, unless he positively wants to maximize the chances of civil war in Poland." Or, in the slightly more diplomatic words of one German official: "We don't see how it's going to help the fate of the Polish people if we let them starve."

Concern about the effect of the Polish crisis on the international financial system may indeed account for the relative mildness of Reagan's economic sanctions. The Administration needed, of course, to appear tough on Moscow—and yet could hardly afford to jeopardize the delicate negotiations between Poland and its creditors. While the sanctions may impede Poland's economic recovery, they are far less drastic than Carter's freezing of Iranian assets. Iran had more assets in the United States to freeze, of course, but the Carter Administration was also under less pressure from European governments than the Reagan Administration is in the Polish crisis.

All parties to the affair, then, are constrained. The Polish regime's discomfort is, of course, the least enviable. It has to prove itself simultaneously to its people and to the Western banks—and so far this task has been impossible. The bankers' position is scarcely more comfortable. The more they pressure Poland to pay off its international financial obligations, the more the country's economy seems to deteriorate.

Curiously, one possible solution—suggested by Lynn Turgeon—involves a cherished Reaganite cure for what ails the world: the gold standard. The Soviet Union has enormous stockpiles of gold but does not want to sell too much of it on today's uncertain market. Were the United States to return to the gold standard—thus providing a guaranteed price—the Soviet Union could sell much of its reserve and use the proceeds to subsidize Poland. "It is," says Turgeon, "a perfect solution. Reagan gets his gold standard, the Poles get bailed out, the banks get their debt service and the Soviets get stability on their borders."

A return to the gold standard is hardly imminent. And so the crisis in the heart of Europe continues to send out financial shock waves. The Western banks will probably absorb hefty losses on the debacle—which they will write off on their tax returns. The Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries will find themselves far less welcome as Euromarket borrowers—indeed, Rumania is on the verge of a Polish-style collapse and Hungary may not be far behind. The Poles will continue to suffer, come what may, in no small measure because they placed too much faith in the power and the benevolence of Western capitalism. ☐

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Total Waugh

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In 1945, shortly after he had completed *Brideshead Revisited*, Evelyn Waugh received a letter from Lady Pansy Lamb. Her name might make her sound like one of Waugh's own less probable creations, but she was a friend and a contemporary and a woman of shrewd taste. She wrote of *Brideshead*:

> But all the richness of your invention, the magical embroideries you fling around your characters cannot make me nostalgic about the world I knew in the 1920s. And yet it was the same world as you describe. . . . Nobody was brilliant, beautiful and rich and the owner of a wonderful house, though some were one or the other. . . . Oxford, too, were Harold Acton and Co really as brilliant as that, or were there wonderful characters I never met? . . . You see English society of the 20s as something baroque and magnificent on its last legs . . . I fled from it because it seemed prosperous, bourgeois and practical and I believe it still is.

Score one for Lady Pansy. We all see, of course, that she is *right*. Her brisk and knowing style reveals the magic of Sebastian Flyte as an affected sham. And besides, isn't *Brideshead* rather repulsive? In its pages we find the most appalling snobbery, the most rancid sort of Catholicism, commingled with deplorable attitudes toward women and a sympathy, at times barely concealed, for prewar fascism. Yet the fact remains that Lady Pansy, though she may have had a good memory for the period, did not know what she was talking about.

Brideshead Revisited may appeal to the nostalgic and the reactionary, but not because it idealizes the 1920s. It is written as a hymn of hate toward the entire modern world and the emerging mass society of cleverness and greed. Waugh may have drawn Sebastian Flyte in glowing colors (before consigning him to a signally abject fate), but he did not forget "Boy" Mulcaster, the slob and bully, or Rex Mottram, the moneyed philistine and opportunist. Nor, for the most part, did he glamorize English social relations or English bourgeois mores. In 1945, Waugh felt that a certain world had perished forever. But his recording of it was still markedly less elegiac than might have been expected.

Why, then, does the book continue to fascinate? Everyone has a secret garden, at least in imagination, which they fear has been, or will be, invaded and trampled. By the time of the final desecration of Brideshead Castle by the British Army, Waugh has emptied it of all but the most incidental of its original cast. The house and its chapel alone remain—the chapel's lamp providing the only light in the enclosing gloom. Waugh himself said later that "the book is about God." So there is more than the secret garden at stake.

I think Waugh aims for, and achieves, quite a different effect. The "sense of loss" he evokes has primarily to do with World War I. When he wrote to a friend that "I should not think six Americans will understand it [*Brideshead*]," he was being more than his usual chauvinist self. He may have meant that the memory of 1914-18 was not really as present or as poignant in this country. But it is present in *Brideshead*, slyly but unmistakably, from the first episode to the last. Waugh is calling on a common store of English folk memory—well caught in a recent essay by John Keegan in *The New York Review of Books*:

> The close at Shrewsbury at evening, Great Tom tolling over Peck, wickets falling at Fenner's, the shades gathering under the chestnut in Balliol garden quad. Englishmen are still brought up on this sort of imagery, if not directly then by osmosis. Indeed for Englishmen of a certain class it is impossible to escape its effect. It does not, of course, describe an England they inhabit.

Brideshead opens in 1923. At Oxford, the undergraduates are, *ex hypothesi*, too young to have fought in the trenches. Small changes have occurred, including a slight improvement in the standing of women, and as Charles Ryder's servant remarks testily to him:

> "If you ask me, sir, it's all on account of the war. It couldn't have happened but for that." For this was 1923 and for Lunt, as for thousands of others, things could never be the same as they had been in 1914.

(Needless to add here that Lady Pansy would have been right if she pointed out that "millions" rather than "thousands" would be less elitist.) Charles himself is not untouched—we learn that his mother died while serving with a medical unit in Serbia. Later, describing Charles and Sebastian together in Venice, Waugh has an extraordinary passage which should be quoted in full:

> The fortnight at Venice passed quickly and sweetly—perhaps too sweetly; I was drowning in honey, stingless. On some days life kept pace with the gondola, as we nosed through the side-canals and the boatman uttered his plaintive musical bird-cry of warning; on other days, with the speed-boat bouncing over the lagoon in a stream of sun-lit foam; it left a confused memory of fierce sunlight on the sands and cool, marble interiors; of water everywhere, lapping on smooth stone, reflected in a dapple of light on painted ceilings; of a night at the Corombona palace such as Byron might have known, and another Byronic night fishing for scampi in the shallows of Chioggia, the phosphorescent wake of the little ship, the lantern swinging in the prow and the net coming up full of weed and sand and floundering fishes; of melon and *prosciutto* on the balcony in the cool of the morning; of hot cheese sandwiches and champagne cocktails at the English bar.
>
> I remember Sebastian looking up at the Colleoni statue and saying, "It's rather sad to think that whatever happens you and I can never possibly get involved in a war."

Soon afterward, Sebastian is a wreck; his charm spoiled and his "epicene" beauty departed. As Waugh says, "The languor of Youth—how unique and quintessential it is! How quickly, how irrecoverably, lost!" I see no reason for Youth with a capital Y in this context unless Waugh intended to remind us of the poems of Wilfred Owen—the "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and all the other verses in which England haltingly came to realize that it had massacred its rising generation a few years before.

That massacre included, in *Brideshead* terms, Sebastian's three uncles. His mother, Lady Marchmain, remains obsessed with their deaths. Mr. Samgrass, the tame and sycophantic historian whom she hires to compose their memorial volume, is also the spy she retains to watch Sebastian at Oxford. She judges all men by the manner in which they measure up to her lost

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brothers. Sebastian cannot possibly enter the contest with these shades. Especially since his father, too, was lost in the war—in the sense that he went off to battle and never came back, preferring to remain on the Continent with his cynical Italian mistress.

Later in the story, after Sebastian's collapse, Charles Ryder gets melancholy drunk with the boorish Lord Mulcaster. They are both eager to join the upper-crust rabble that in 1926 formed private squads to break the General Strike:

> We went to a number of night clubs. In two years Mulcaster seemed to have attained his simple ambition of being known and liked in such places. At the last of them he and I were kindled by a great flame of patriotism.
>
> "You and I," he said, "were too young to fight in the war. Other chaps fought, millions of them dead. Not us. We'll show them. We'll show the dead chaps we can fight, too."
>
> "That's why I'm here," I said. "Come from overseas, rallying to old country in hour of need."
>
> "Like Australians."
>
> "Like the poor dead Australians."

The boozy bathos of this little scene does not hide the depth of feeling. Indeed, like other English writers of the period, Waugh often preferred to approach the subject by means of allusion. In his magnificent study *The Great War in Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell points out that only in England did the classical tag *Et in Arcadia ego* retain its authentic significance. It means, being translated, *not* "And I have dwelt in Arcadia too" but "Even in Arcadia I, Death, hold sway." The whole first section of *Brideshead* is entitled *Et in Arcadia ego*. Early in the story, Charles Ryder's rooms at Oxford are embellished with

> a human skull lately purchased from the School of Medicine, which, resting in a bowl of roses, formed, at the moment, the chief decoration of my table. It bore the motto *Et in Arcadia ego* inscribed on its forehead.

Fussell also points out, by reference to Siegfried Sassoon and others, the powerful symbolism of the rose in the commemoration of the 1914-18 holocaust.

One consequence of all this, if I am right, is that the homosexual undertones of the novel become more comprehensible. I don't think there is much doubt that Waugh means us to understand a love affair between Charles and Sebastian. Again, the context is of doomed youth and of the idea, so essential to the mythology of the Great War, that the summer of 1914 was the most golden and languorous of all:

> Now, that summer term with Sebastian, it seemed as though I was being given a brief spell of what I had never known, a happy childhood, and though its toys were silk shirts and liqueurs and cigars and its naughtiness high in the catalogue of grave sins, there was something of nursery freshness about us that fell little short of the joy of innocence.

Wilfred Owen's own homosexual preference was seldom directly evident in his poems (the letters are more explicit). But the cult of youth and beauty, and the influence of A. E. Housman, are both powerful clues. Waugh, writing in 1945, could hardly have been innocent of the suggestions in that last paragraph. It's clear, anyway, that the "grave sin" was not smoking or drinking. So when Anthony Blanche remarks to Sebastian during this time, "My dear, I should like to stick you full of barbed arrows like a p-p-pin-cushion," he doesn't merely remind us once more of martyrdom, but chooses the one that has always had the greatest homosexual appeal—the lissom youth bleeding and transfixed. Owen's dying boy soldiers are not far away in that utterance either.

It may be that "the book is about God," but there is no real theology in it. Lord Marchmain's deathbed repentance is a sickly farce, embarrassing to serious Catholics. The wrangle over Julia's marriage to the divorced Rex is a mere drawing-room drama, where the fear of "scandal" easily vanquishes any matter of principle. Sebastian's terminus among the monks is a chance result of his own dissipation. The only Catholic with any sort of vocation in the whole lot is little Cordelia, and she volunteers to go and help General Franco. Waugh believed in original sin all right—he literally personified it in dialogue. For example, Sebastian writes to Charles: "I am in mourning for my lost innocence. It never looked like living. The doctors despaired of it from the start." And his sister Julia says much later:

> "Always the same, like an idiot child carefully nursed, guarded from the world. 'Poor Julia,' they say, 'she can't go out. She's got to take care of her little sin. A pity it ever lived,' they say, 'but it's so strong. Children like that always are. Julia's so good to her little, mad sin.'"

But really, aside from painful construc-

tions like that, *Brideshead* is pretty much free of religiosity. It is not read, nor was it ever read, as a work of devotion or apology. But worse parodies have been made of it. One of them is playing at the moment on PBS.

I expect this series to do very well. British made, and featuring Laurence Olivier and John Gielgud, it trades on a certain image of my country that seems to go down well in America. It is the same image that is catered for by Alistair Cooke in his urbane openings to *Masterpiece Theatre*, and by Robert Morley in his plummy promotion of British Airways. A country idyllic, antique and lovably eccentric, where traditional good manners are upheld at the relatively low cost of an admittedly "outmoded" class system.

The gorgeousness of scenery and setting have been very lovingly done. The hints of upper-class debauchery and high jinks are all there. But there is little subtlety and less tragedy, and none of the feeling of a maimed and bereaved country. The characterization is all wrong, too. Jeremy Irons plays Charles Ryder as a heartbreaker, but Ryder is supposed to be a bit of a stick. (In answer to a query from Nancy Mitford as to how anybody could fall in love with him, Waugh allowed "He *is* dim.") Sebastian Flyte appears as a second-rate camp individual, instead of the careless but complex figure he cuts in the novel. Anthony Blanche becomes a leering little queen, whereas the book makes plain that he was tough and intelligent as well as sexually versatile. Some of the minor characters are exquisite (Mr. Samgrass is just right, and Gielgud is splendid as Ryder's awful father). But poor adaptation and editing have removed countless nuances that are vitally necessary. (Watch the early scene where Blanche warns Ryder of Sebastian's charm, and then look it up in print.) Finally, beware of the bookstalls. Little, Brown has reissued its 1945 edition in a gruesome "book of the series" format. Get the 1960 revised edition if you can.

Brideshead Revisited is not a comedy of social manners, or a tract. It is not the intellectual's *Upstairs, Downstairs*. It is not a bland celebration of the English country house. It is an imperfect, often awkward but finally haunting rendition of a national myth. Composed during the last world war, it illuminates the influences, and captures the sense of longing and waste, that had led to it from the previous one. □

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Deciphering Codes

LEWIS HYDE

LEGACIES: Selected Poems. *By Heberto Padilla. Translated by Alastair Reid and Andrew Hurley. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 179 pp. $15.*

The Right praises me
(in no time they will defame me)
The Left has given me a name
(have they not begun to have
doubts?)
. . .
Don't greet me, I beg you.
Don't even speak to me.
If you see me, keep to one side.
("Self-portrait of the other")

For the moment, at least, the task is not to "keep to one side" at all but to look at the man and his work directly. This is not so easy: in the last twenty years, Heberto Padilla's literary career has passed through almost every possible permutation of the modern conjunction of art and politics, and it is tempting to settle on a single such permutation as the entry into his poetry.

Born in Cuba fifty years ago, Padilla, who spent some of his youth in the United States, has been both the child of Third World colonial capitalism and its expatriate. His return to Cuba after Fidel Castro came to power made him a revolutionary; he worked first as a cultural editor at the daily *Revolución* and then as a correspondent for the Cuban news agency in London and in Moscow.

Padilla slowly became the gadfly of the revolution, writing with growing skepticism of modern socialism and its theorists. In 1968 he was the focus of a literary scandal when an international jury awarded him Cuba's annual poetry prize only to have the government try to block the award. In 1971 Padilla was jailed, briefly, and then humiliated into a public confession of his "errors." He spent a decade in isolation and last year was either forced or went voluntarily into exile, depending on who you talk to.

This history is so varied, and it plays such an important role in the poems, that the absence of any critical framing or chronology is one of the present collection's few faults. A poem telling us that "the best ground for a man to be on is his own ground, his garden, his own house," may read a little differently depending on whether it was written in 1951 in New York, 1961 in Havana, 1971 in jail or 1981 in New Jersey, where Padilla is settled at the moment. And the poem "Between March and April is my cruelest month" makes more sense if we know that Padilla was imprisoned between March 20 and April 25, 1971.

But I should temper this complaint somewhat. Padilla had a hand in assembling this collection, and it must be his hope that the poems will not be read only as messages from the situations of their writing. The soldier thugs who appear in "Between March and April" are not that different, really, from the "inspector of heresies" who appears in a poem from the late 1950s. Interrogators are interrogators, whether they are Batista's or the C.I.A.'s or Castro's.

One of Padilla's "obsessive themes" (as he calls them) is a complaint about our modern ideologies of history. In a brief sketch called "The traveling companion," a young woman reading her manual of Marx and Lenin looks out the window of a train and exclaims that she sees history going by; Padilla looks out and sees "roads and barbed wire/ and beasts/male and female. . . ." An aphoristic quatrain warns

Don't you forget it, poet.
In whatever place or time
you make, or suffer, History,
some dangerous poem is always
stalking you.
("According to the old bards")

This may not fit very well into a history-will-absolve-me kind of revolutionary society, but it is not a defense of individualism, either. It's a defense of the imagination. History teaches that history cannot teach everything.

There is a word that keeps appearing in these poems: *clave. Clave* usually means a code or the key to a code, but in the context of Padilla's work it comes to mean something closer to gnosis, or spiritual insight. Thus in the complicated and evocative poem "The childhood of William Blake," a voice chastises Blake as a child: "You've a bad tongue. You steal/from the larder./ Your face is dirty./You're always making riddles [*claves*],/etchings/engravings." Blake's poems themselves are the *claves* he has left us, "symbols,/your gifts/shining in the wilderness."

The word *decifrar*—to decipher—recurs alongside *clave*. The poet stands "at the door of a butcher shop/open-mouthed deciphering signs," for example. The two words denote the complementary tasks of the poet: to decode the real and to leave behind the work, the "keys," by which we may do the same.

Throughout this book, however, we find Padilla dubious about such undertakings in the twentieth century: "Impossible . . . to compose a poem at this late stage of civilization. . . ./Impossible . . . to find . . . /a window with no radar,/a pine table with no maps, no calculations." Our environment is now so rationalized and politicized as to be inhospitable to the part of our being that creates a work of art. In the poem on Blake we read that "there are no signs,/no codes/the Ministry of War/ cannot decipher." The terms do not, in this case, refer to either the "codes" or the "deciphering" that leads to gnosis. They refer instead to that vulgar rationalism that assumes we have already entered the penetralium of mystery, assumes we can name and root out the causes of human cruelty, and by these assumptions ignores what powers we do possess, not to "explain" mystery but to reveal it, not to do away with cruelty but to heal its wounds.

A fine descriptive poem in this collection begins as follows:

This garden
set down a few yards from the river
gave shelter, from the wind that
came with the rain,
to this sick owl,
plumped in the mud like a saboteur.
And that branch of myrrh, with its
yellow flower
and the hidden thorn, ripped the udder of the old cow,
and the palm, split by lightning,
blackens downriver in the current.
Thus life weaves its crowns of laurel
and tin,
hunched like a seamstress over
reality,
joining its remnants dark and
brilliant.
("Just by opening your eyes")

And so does poetry. In a short essay in *The New York Times* last September, Padilla wrote: "During the last 20 years, I lived in a world made up of ideas painted in black and white." It is the work of the imagination to resolve the opposites, to find those secondary shades that are neither black nor white, to be a seamstress to the real. Some third thing must lie between "in-

Lewis Hyde's book on art and property, The Gift, *is due from Random House next winter. He is the translator of Vicente Aleixandre, Spain's 1977 Nobel laureate.*

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dividualist" and "revolutionary." The imagination resolves conflict not through that old dialectic of Hegel but through the even older one of Ovid: metamorphosis. I do not mean to say that polar opposites have no place in the world, but when everything *must* be cast in such terms, then there is no true debate, and certainly no art.

This is sad stuff, really. Poetry is not impossible in this century, as these poems testify, but in Padilla we have, I think, a poet who has not been able to mine the richest veins of his sensibility because of the situation of his birth. He is temperamentally closer to W. H. Auden or Antonio Machado than, say, to Nicolás Guillén or Ernesto Cardenal. Left alone in London or Mexico City for the last twenty years, he might have given us a different group of poems—more poems on childhood, on sexual love, on the voices of the past, on landscape and spirit, and, yes, on politics, but political poems less busy adjusting their voices so as to slip between the slogans, black and white.

Long ago Padilla told a friend, "The last thing I want to be is the Rebel Poet in a socialist society." But that is what he became. And now? Now we have the first American selection of his work. His publisher is to be congratulated for bringing it out. But we could have had most of this book ten years ago. We have it now because we are going to make Padilla the Ex-Rebel Poet in a capitalist society. "If you see me, keep to one side." My hope is that we don't do this to him, that we leave him alone so that in five or ten years we will see another book, one with a touch more of the Blakean prophetic voice and a touch less wry irony, that exoskeleton which modern talent must exude to protect itself from "one side or the other." □

Why This, Why That

TOM CHAFFIN

AMERICA NOW: The Anthropology of a Changing Culture. *By Marvin Harris. Simon and Schuster. 208 pp. $12.95.*

With the right promotion, this could become the indispensable book for cocktail party philosophers in 1982. Certainly the title suggests we are in the presence of a definitive statement. And the chapter headings are equally seductive. In their appealing alliteration and in their implied promise of easy answers to the most vexing questions of the day, they resemble the oily phrases of a skilled carny barker, enticing one and all into this big tent of a book: "Why Nothing Works," "Why the Help Won't Help You," "Why the Dollar Shrank," "Why Women Left Home," "Why the Gays Came Out of the Closet," "Why There's Terror on the Streets," "Why the Cults Are Coming," "Why America Changed."

Marvin Harris has written the 1980s version of *The Greening of America*—a literary endorsement of mob wisdom destined to become tomorrow's period piece. It's not that *America Now: The Anthropology of a Changing Culture* is a terrible book. Harris often assembles impressive arguments to support what he calls the "holistic" thrust of his work—that many of the social changes seen in post-World War II America were caused by the shift from an economy concerned primarily with producing goods to one wedded to providing services and information. The author even makes a worthy Malthusian case for his belief that both the entry of women into the labor force and the recent relaxing of taboos against homosexuality are functions of a diminution of the marketplace's "procreative imperative." The problem is that most of this terrain has been covered before, and more skillfully, by, among others, Christopher Lasch, Daniel Bell and Lester Thurow.

But Jules Henry's *Culture Against Man* is the book against which Harris's compendium of modern American issues must be measured. Henry, also a cultural anthropologist, developed his book in 1963 from interviews with high school students, housewives, blue-collar laborers and other Americans. Their voices and Henry's judicious commentary stand solidly with those of De Tocqueville, Veblen and C. Wright Mills. Henry's book worked because he brought to it the lenses of an anthropologist trying to come to terms with his native culture. Harris checks those lenses at the door. The thoughtful analysis he employed in his earlier work, such as *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Cultures*, is absent here. The strength of *Culture Against Man* lay in its specificity and in Henry's reticence to speak beyond his and his subjects' own knowledge and experience; *America Now* suffers from thematic dispersion and punditry.

The experiences of Harris's subjects come to us secondhand, and they sound less like responses to his questions than like whining anecdotes on themes such as inefficient bureaucrats, computer foul-ups and the shoddy workmanship of American cars. The author even offers a "personal example," a tedious story of how a hospital overbilled him. What does all this mean?

> Louis Harris conducted a poll in 1979 in which 57 percent of the respondents said they were "deeply worried" about the poor quality of the products they were buying. Seventy-seven percent expressed the feeling that "manufacturers don't care about me." Based on a separate sampling of national opinion, *U.S. News & World Report* concluded "dissatisfaction runs wider and deeper than many experts suspected." Of the people responding to the pollsters' questions, 59 percent said they had returned one or more unsatisfactory products to the place of purchase during the preceding twelve months. A year later, the figure had risen to 70 percent.

And so on. Such figures don't make compelling journalism. They are even less impressive as scholarship. The difference between this type of outing and real sociology—or real anthropology—is the difference between so-called service journalism and real journalism. The former anticipates the audience's needs and prejudices, then proceeds to shill for them. The latter seeks authentic insight and operates with some notion of the public interest.

Only a lingering faith in the eventual vindication of Reaganomics led the publishers of this book to abandon at the last minute its snappier original title, *America: Why Nothing Works*. But whatever care was devoted to the book's packaging was not given to the text. H. L. Mencken's axiom "No one ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American public" is given here as "No one ever lost money by underestimating the intelligence of the average American." Such indifference

Tom Chaffin lives in San Francisco and travels frequently, writing on North American life and culture.

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to detail, coupled with a desire to accommodate its audience, also animates the book's polemical thrust. From its bloated determinism and reliance upon caricature (bra-burning feminists, Jonestown cultists, family-hating homosexuals) to its unsurprising scapegoats (Big Business and Big Government) this work perfectly anticipates, while it also condescends to, the large audience it wants to reach. □

LINGO.

JIM QUINN

America is full of satirists of syntax. Some with a not unkindly twinkle of the eye, some with a rapier stroke of wit, some with a cheery pun—all using their humor as a weapon, to get us to think about the way we talk and write. And to get us to talk and write the way they want us to.

It seems cruel to criticize these helpful people. Many are amateurs working for nothing but love of the language and a mention in one of the syndicated word columns ("Franco Lingua of White Plains complains about the word . . ."). Many more refuse even to have their names in print ("Call me Jeanette Doe"). They are indefatigable, they are constantly on the alert—they are able, when the rest of us are concentrating on the facts of some natural or government-made disaster, to hear every tiny flaw in the grammar of the reporter. They each have a word or phrase, regrettably popular, that "drives them up the wall." And they seem perfectly happy—despite their despair over our collective inability to follow simple instructions. They have achieved that placid sense of superiority that comes only to people who are convinced that they're on the side of God, and history, and the angels, and stylistic felicity.

But they don't know anything about language, or syntax, or grammar.

Almost all their helpfulness is, in fact, directed against normal idioms of the English language—idioms that have been in use, unquestioned use, for centuries. Take William Safire's column in *The New York Times Magazine*, which is our best-written record of imagined crimes against the English language and almost always bears a punny title. In a column complaining about "the rash of usage" of the suffix *ive*, called (of course) "An Outbreak of Ives," Safire notes that reporters almost always used the word *abortive* when describing Jimmy Carter's failed rescue mission in Iran. Luckily, "An alert reader noticed."

> "I expect correct usage from the reporters and commentators of our electronic media," complained Franco Lingua of White Plains. "About half the above reported on our 'abortive' attempt to rescue the hostages. My plans for extended listening were aborted."

Here we have alert reader at his best: eight men are killed, the hostages are endangered, America is denounced as aggressive and adventurous in the United Nations—Franco Lingua cannot bear to listen because he objects to the syllable *ive*.

And Safire agrees with Franco: "Of course—the raid was not *abortive* . . . it was *aborted*. . . . The suffix *ive* implies 'continuing or permanent' . . . and to attribute continuation to a specific abortion is an absurdity. . . . An 'abortive mission' is one whose abrupt and early termination was planned all along."

But that is simply not true. The Oxford English Dictionary, Webster's Second, Webster's Third, The Random House Dictionary, The Concise Oxford, The American Heritage Dictionary, even the quirky Oxford American Dictionary, all define abortive as "unsuccessful"—without any indication that the failure was planned all along.

The O.E.D. provides a couple of quotes that demonstrate the word has never been restricted to planned disasters:

> This also proved abortive, though there was great appearance of success at first. PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, 1665.
>
> Our first design, my friend, has proved abortive. Addison, CATO, 1773.

Random House adds as illustration: "An abortive rebellion, an abortive scheme." An abortive rebellion is not, of course, a rebellion whose early termination was planned all along. And abortive is a perfectly ordinary and unexceptional word to apply to missions of the American armed forces that turn out to be . . . abortive. But Safire is not through attacking normal usage:

> People afflicted with "ives" have been known to add unnecessary syllables to the root word. . . . Doctors used to

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talk about "preventive medicine"; recently—*ta-dah!* an extra *ta* has appeared in that *ive* and the word has stretched itself out to *preventative.*

A new Franco Lingua, this time a doctor, condemns this *ta* as "another example of adding extra fat to a common word, making it sound more important." Luckily, once again, this alert listener "has a cure": "Whenever someone uses *preventative*, I counter with preventatative." "An ounce of preventive beats a pound of preventatative," adds Safire in one final parting jeer.

Was ever a word so nearly destroyed as preventative is in this brief and witty passage? Is there anyone, after reading it, who will not join Dr. Lingua in correcting friends with that elegant cure, preventatative? And what are we to say about the neat pun in *ta-dah!*

Only this: *preventative* is not a new word. First cite in the O.E.D. is 1654; first cite of *preventive* in its medical sense is 1646. Preventive and preventative have always existed side by side. Some people—Fuller, Blackstone, Southey and Jowett, according to the O.E.D.—used *preventive.* But Daniel Defoe used *preventative* in his *Journal of the Plague Year,* a book highly praised for its clear and simple idiomatic style. And George Washington wrote in 1793: "Wearing flannel next the skin is the best cure for, and preventative of the Rheumatism I ever tried." Sound doctrine, sound sense and, as usual, sound English from the father of our country.

The O.E.D. does say that *preventive* is the preferred form, but the Concise Oxford of 1923, edited by H.W. Fowler of *Modern English Usage* fame, lists *preventative* and *preventive* without expressing any preference. Most modern dictionaries follow Fowler: the Oxford American, the O.E.D. So, as is almost always the case in arguments about usage, you can take your choice—and be sure of having an expert on your side. Words are like colors: if you hate a word, don't use it. I myself find it hard to think of words as ugly based on sound alone—but if I did, I would probably put *bobolink, spaghetti* and *smegma* at the head of the list. You may feel differently. But hating yellow is no reason to tell the rest of us not to wear yellow. And if you are going to alert the world every time someone violates your idiosyncratic ideas of appropriate color coordination (or word use), you are going to do an awful lot of alerting, and to no purpose. Which is exactly what makes most word columns so self-congratulatory, so uninformative and so annoying. The aim of this particular word column, of course, is information—which may annoy you too. But at least in a different way. □

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THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

A Soldier's Play

After fourteen seasons, the Negro Ensemble Company can no longer be regarded as an exotic enterprise on the fringe. The N.E.C. came into being because the established American theater didn't seem to have any place for the black experience. So the group proceeded to carve such a place for itself, with determination if not always a clear notion of what it was doing. Its stance was either aggressive, that of an adversary, or defensive, which meant insular and self-validating; it stumbled, fell, rose and kept going.

Never quite a true ensemble, in that it frequently brings in performers for particular productions, the company has had difficulty creating an identifiable style, a way of doing things unmistakably its own. If it still has that difficulty, at least its repertory has become much more flexible, so that its socially oriented realism has lost some of the pugnacious, parochial quality that once marred it.

Charles Fuller's *A Soldier's Play*, the opening production of the N.E.C.'s fifteenth season, is exemplary of this change and, as I see it, this growth. A flawed but estimable play, it's about the black experience but is supple enough in its thematic range and social perspectives to treat that experience as part of a complex whole, as part of American reality in its widest sense. To be released from an adversary position may mean a loss of fierceness—it certainly means a reduction in ideological thunder—but it can make for an increase in subtle wisdom and intellectual rigor.

Not that *A Soldier's Play* is a triumph of the dramatic imagination. But it is intelligent and morally various enough to overcome some basic uncertainties and remnants of the N.E.C.'s older confrontational manner, and so commend itself to our attention. Set in a Louisiana army camp in 1944, the play deals with the fatal shooting of a black sergeant (reflecting the times, blacks are called "negroes" or "coloreds"), a martinet who, out of shame at his people's seeming acceptance of their inferior status, is tougher on his own men than are their white officers.

He's far from likable, but when he's killed and the culprits aren't found, the mood turns ugly among the black soldiers. At first, the Klan is suspected, then some white officers, but the brass wants no trouble and the incident is shunted aside. Finally, an investigator is sent from Washington, a black lieutenant with a law degree from Howard University. His relationship with the white captain previously in charge of the case makes up the moral and psychological center of the drama, which on one level proceeds as a moderately absorbing detective story.

The captain, an earnest liberal, is convinced he knows who the killers are but feels his hands are tied, and he grows impatient with the black officer's slow, careful inquiry. The real problem, however, is the dislocation the captain experiences in his abstract good will. "I can't get used to it," he tells the black man, "your uniform, your bars." Still, he comes to accept the investigator, whose mind is much more in tune with reality than his own and who eventually brings the case to a surprising conclusion. Along the way there are some deft perceptions about both political and psychological matters, and a jaunty historical sense: "Look out, Hitler," a soldier says, "the niggers is comin' to get your ass."

The biggest burden the play carries is the direction of Douglas Turner Ward, the N.E.C.'s artistic director, who is also a well-known playwright. Ward manages the many flashbacks, through which the action is propelled, with a heavy hand: lights go up or down with painful slowness, figures from the past *take their places* obediently in the present. There are also some soft spots among the performances and an unpleasant ending, or coda, in which the black officer gratuitously reminds his white colleague of the lessons taught and learned. Yet in its calm concern for prickly truths and its intellectual sobriety, *A Soldier's Play* elicits the audi-

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ence's approval, if not its boisterous enthusiasm. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Four Friends
Pennies From Heaven

The company with whom I marked the final midnight of 1981 behaved less like the celebrants of other years and more like surprised survivors of some natural disaster. Against a background of popping corks they could be heard assuring one another, on grounds unspecified, that 1982 could not possibly be as bad. Cold comfort on a rainy New Year's Eve.

The striking exception to the tinsel-bedecked anxiety of the recent holidays was the booming prosperity of the movie houses. Hit films were playing at almost every theater in town, and the newspaper ads poured out such choruses of critical hosannas as to suggest that we had fallen unexpectedly into a cinematic renaissance. Two of the pictures that have been contributing to this bonanza are Arthur Penn's *Four Friends* and Herbert Ross's *Pennies From Heaven*. Appropriately enough, they share a preoccupation with the American Dream.

Steven Tesich, who wrote a splendid script for *Breaking Away*, has come up with a peculiar one for *Four Friends*. It is a movie that aspires to grandeur, but pays scant heed to consistency, continuity or common sense. We are told that Georgia Miles, sweetheart of the graduating class at Roosevelt High School, East Chicago, Indiana, fancies herself the spiritual daughter of Isadora Duncan. That being so, she swirls and sways a bit ostentatiously, has a baby by one of her classmates, marries a second and is last seen in the arms of a third, her favorite from the start. Those are the four referred to in the title, but only Georgia (Jodi Thelen) and Danilo Prozor (Craig Wasson) are much in evidence. The other two drop in on the film when needed for comic relief or to advance a plot which, like a sportive dolphin, keeps diving out of sight and reappearing in some unexpected spot.

The apparent purpose of *Four Friends* is to discover how much of a beating a pair of dreamers could take in the 1960s without losing their faith in America, the promised land. Danilo gets the harder knocks. He is the son of a Yugoslav steelworker, a spectacularly embittered man who so belabors Danilo in an attempt to acquaint him with the realities of American slave labor that the youth runs off to college. There he rooms with a rich chap who is dying courageously of muscular dystrophy and who has a rich and beautiful sister. Danilo woos and wins the girl, and for a moment it seems that America is making good on its promises. Unfortunately, there is also a rich father, one whose affection for his daughter so exceeds paternal limits that, as the guests are toasting the happy couple, he pulls out a gun, kills the bride, grievously wounds the groom and blows out his own brains.

About then I rather lost touch with Danilo, but I gather he wanders, homeless and partially blinded, around New York City, where he runs into Georgia and briefly shares her lodgings. They part, she to follow Isadora's star through some particularly unsavory nightclubs, he to return to East Chicago with a contract in his pocket to teach English literature at a college in Texas. Soon enough, Georgia shows up, child in hand and with her feathers drooping. She and Danilo gaze into each other's eyes, stretch out their arms in yearning and drift off together into the closing credits.

Four Friends is said to recapture what it was like to be young in the 1960s. But the film's portrayal of that experience makes it seem considerably more ridiculous than one would have supposed.

Pennies From Heaven harks back some thirty years earlier than *Four Friends* to the Great Depression, when suicides were not uncommon on Wall Street and we all fled to the movie palaces, where Busby Berkeley allayed our fears with garlands and bouquets of Hollywood beauties swimming to waltz time through the marble halls of Xanadu. It was then that Bing Crosby first sang the assuaging lyric of indigence—"Every time it rains, it rains pennies from heaven"—a melody that now flows with vicious insouciance through perhaps the most expert, certainly the most disconcerting, musical comedy I have ever encountered. It makes *Guys and Dolls* seem naïve.

All the materials in Ross's *Pennies From Heaven*—the plot, the characters, the songs, the dances and the sets—derive from the escapist extravaganzas of that mean decade before Franklin Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler got the U.S. economy back on its feet again. This skewed operetta sparkles because its parody seems—and may well be—more accomplished than the fantasy it apes. It is shocking because its tone is sardonic, because it ends not in a cottage small but on the gallows. As an appraisal of the era, it is no more reliable than were *Dames*, *Wonder Bar*, *Whoopee* or the original *Pennies From Heaven*, but it offers as an antidote to those saccharine festivities aspects of life hitherto little associated with musicals: adultery, abortion, hunger, prostitution, rape and murder.

In Dennis Potter's script, Steve Martin plays the boy, Bernadette Peters the girl, and they are a gamy pair. Arthur is a down-at-heels traveling salesman of sheet music. He is burdened with a frigid wife (Jessica Harper), an exhausted car and the worst territory in the Middle West, but he is ruthless in his conviction that somewhere in this great country there must be a place where the lyrics he peddles come true. Eileen, the primmest of schoolmistresses, takes to sex with the enthusiasm of Catherine the Great, advancing from frump to floozy in one night with Arthur. The principals are assisted by, among others, Christopher Walken, who plays a speak-easy tomcat, and Vernel Bagneris, as a starving, stammering accordion player whose fate it is to tip the story from misery into horror. When, as often happens, these four step out of character into Danny Daniels's lush and mocking choreography, it turns out that they dance so well as to make you cheer. They also belt out the title song, and eight or ten more as famous, with an authority that would be greatly to their credit if their own voices were doing the singing. In fact, though, the solos are dubbed with a glottal awkwardness that is also part of the film's disillusioning mimicry. Other shocks of recognition are buried like plums in this odd-tasting cake, but I will not spoil the fun by mentioning them here.

Ross, Daniels, Nora Kaye (co-producer with Ross) and the others concerned chose to put teeth in Hollywood's most emollient product, and at the same time to pour cold laughter over the most tragic period in the country's recent past. To succeed, the job had to be done surpassingly well. And so it was. □

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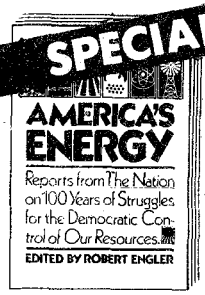
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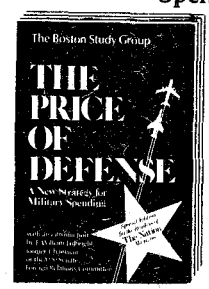

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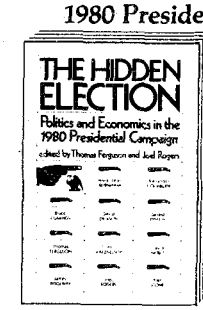

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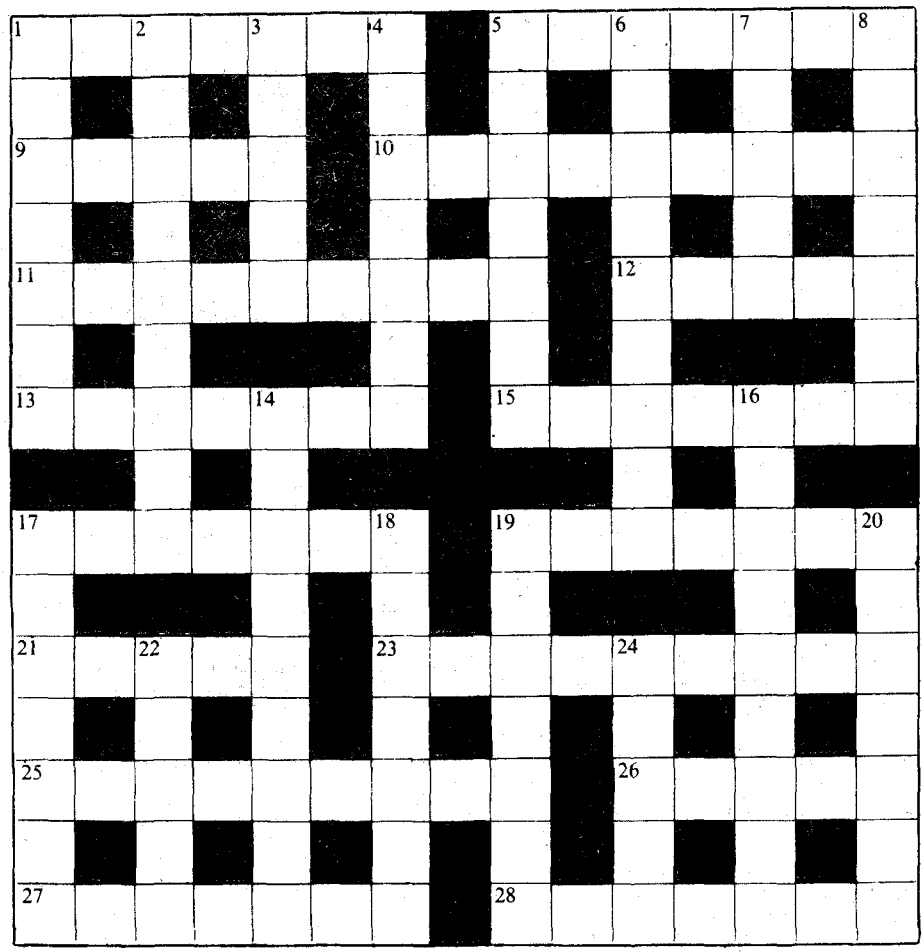
S	■	R	■	N	■	N	A	■	E	■	R	■	U	■
C	H	E	C	K	S	T	U	B	■	N	O	O	K	S
O	■	A	■	N	■	E	■	I	■	E	■	N	■	T
O	U	T	D	O	O	R	■	N	I	G	H	T	O	F
T	■	■	■	W	■	A	■	■	■	E	■	I	■	U
S	T	A	I	N	■	C	O	L	D	S	P	E	L	L
■	■	N	■	■	■	T	■	A	■	■	■	R	■	■
D	I	N	N	E	R	S	E	T	■	D	I	S	C	O
E	■	O	■	L	■	■	■	C	■	E	■	■	■	U
N	E	T	W	O	R	K	■	H	A	L	F	W	I	T
O	■	A	■	P	■	I	■	K	■	I	■	H	■	L
T	I	T	L	E	■	T	H	E	I	G	U	A	N	A
E	■	E	■	R	■	E	■	Y	■	H	■	L	■	W
S	A	D	I	S	T	S	■	S	I	T	T	E	R	■

Crossword Puzzle No. 1899

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Used for binding two animals together. (7)
5 See 9
9 and 5 across Not exactly earth-shattering, but you might make this out to be lot-drawing. (5-7)
10 Telling their age, vain people sometimes do, typified by "1984." (4,5)
11 Putting down all the 15? (9)
12 Once-remembered state of the first letter in "pit," as the English say. (5)
13 As an ultimate state of uniformity, try "open" for a change. (7)
15 Picks one out for a service job, perhaps. (7)
17 An unusual part of the dish. (7)
19 A simple narrative poem on a broken reed—obviously structured on different levels. (7)
21 Did her daughter-in-law set an example by going along with one of her relatives? (5)
23 As of old, a difficult client might make it in any surroundings. (9)
25 Like skill coming back to the Asian leader in Karakul. (9)
26 My master, according to such as David. (5)
27 When legal things revert to promises to pay, it isn't funny! (7)
28 A mild protest that seems to be suitable notice for the peephole. (3,4)

DOWN

1 Bend on a rope with a knot. (7)
2 Find fault first, and then come in with one of those well-known beach diners. (9)
3 Spoke in the plural form, perhaps. (5)
4 If the Dublin girl's around, smooth things over! (7)
5 Talked big, but a bad egg arbitrarily comes back with it. (7)
6 Bursting into tears? My, my! There's nothing regular about it! (9)
7 How one group of terrorists raises the so-called level of intelligence of another fighter at present? (5)
8 Inserts such, and possibly suggests losing a grand. (7)
14 It takes a mixed bag to boil an accompanying figure out of it! (9)
16 Touchy, as one might say. (9)
17 They might be due to letters. (7)
18 What a 26 does at times, in case the change is made. (7)
19 They sometimes describe getting a 5 across in your boots, possibly. (7)
20 From dawn to dark does a distraught maid yet make it? (7)
22 A change of route describes a certain space. (5)
24 It's uncanny, but there's only one point on the lake that's well-known. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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